

THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

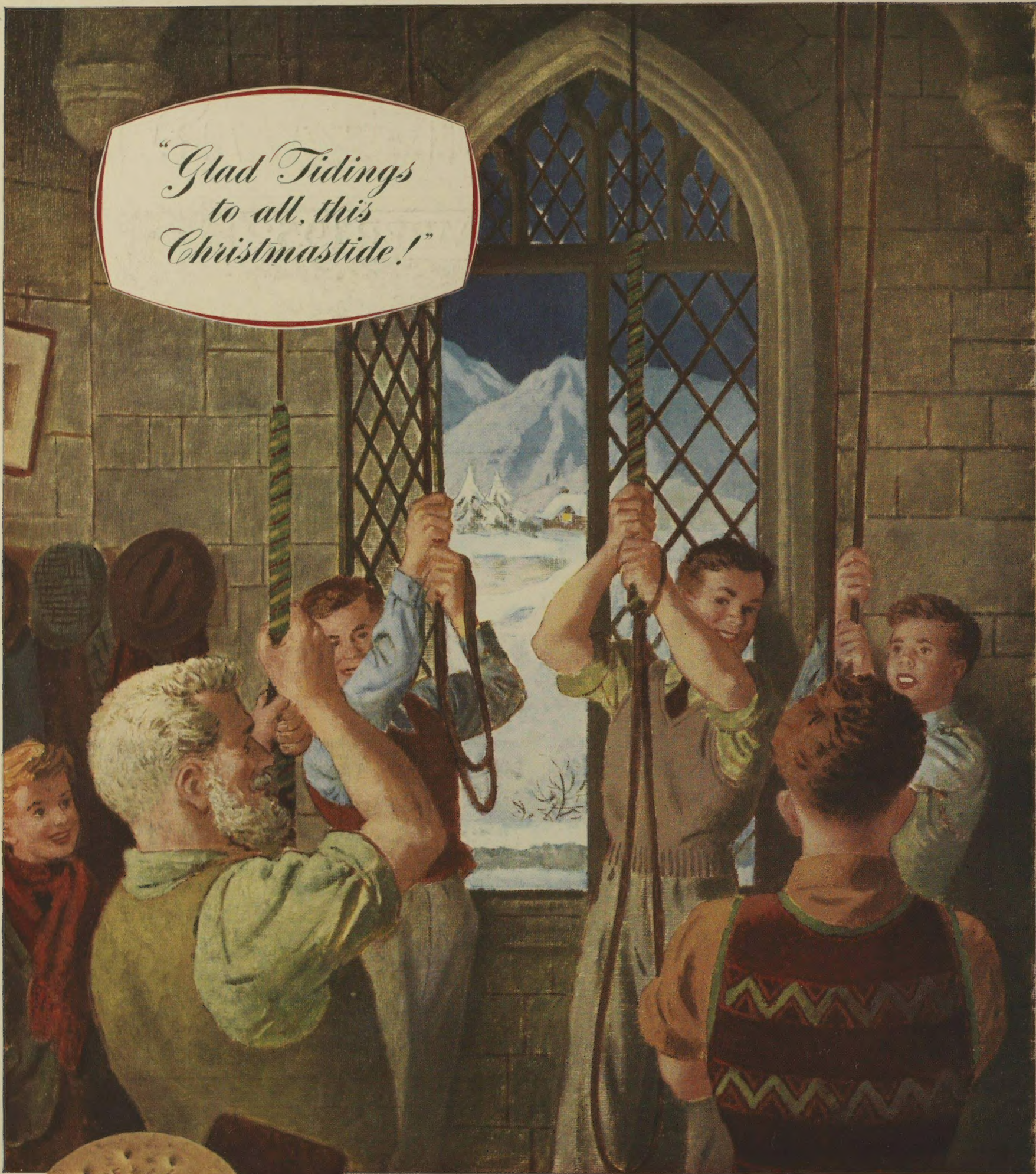
CHRISTMAS NUMBER 1952



"MORNING MIST."

BY W. VAN DE VELDE

*"Glad Tidings
to all, this
Christmastide!"*



A Happy Christmas and
a Prosperous New Year from

McVITIE & PRICE
LIMITED

Makers of Finest Quality Biscuits



By Appointment
Purveyor of Cherry Heering
to
The late King George VI



By Appointment
Purveyor of Cherry Heering
to H. M.
King Frederik IX



By Appointment
Purveyor of Cherry Heering
to H. M.
King Gustaf VI Adolf



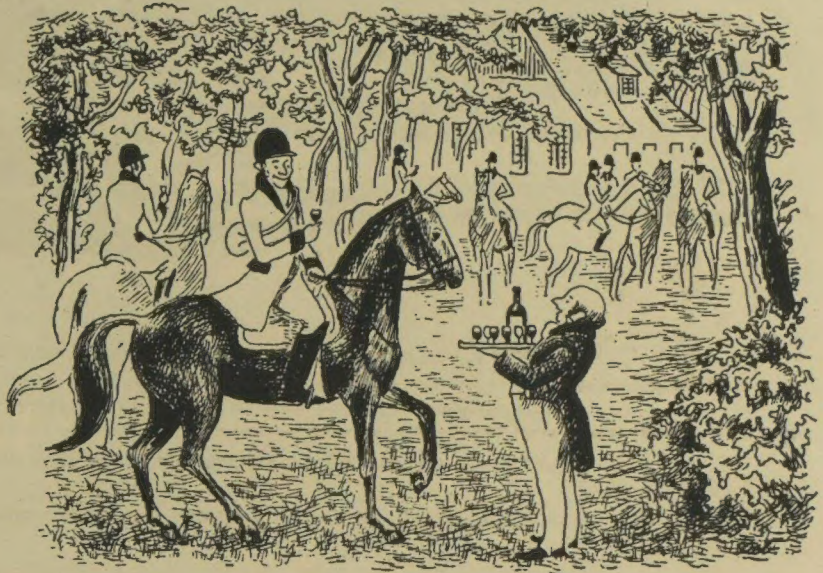
By Appointment
Purveyor of Cherry Heering
to H. M.
The Queen of the Netherlands

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Through four generations

CHERRY HEERING has
witnessed as well as created many
precious moments.

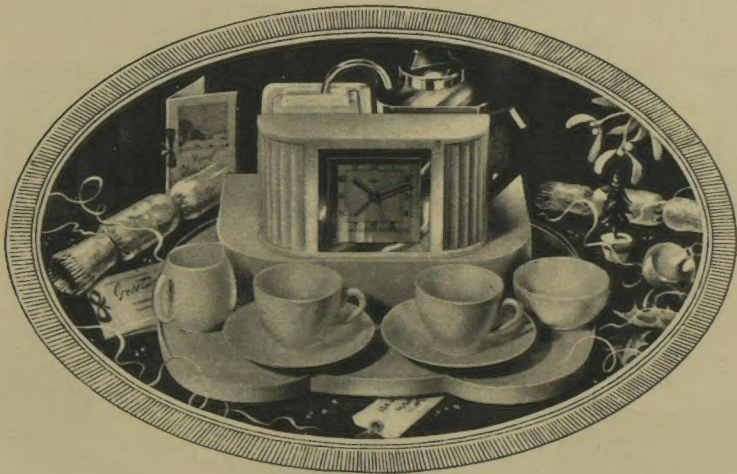
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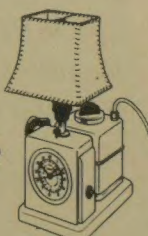
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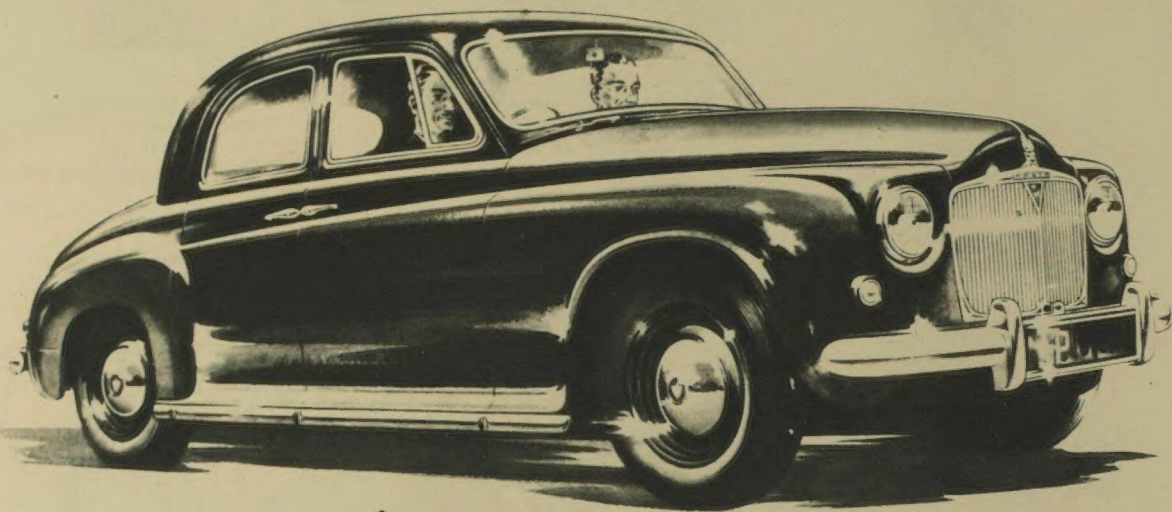
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The Rover Co. Ltd.

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DRESS REHEARSAL

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"Cartwright is the name, sir. Only yesterday she said, 'I count on Mr. Gerald to wear the full regalia!'"

"Do you not feel, Hawkins, that a man of your build—with your benign expression,

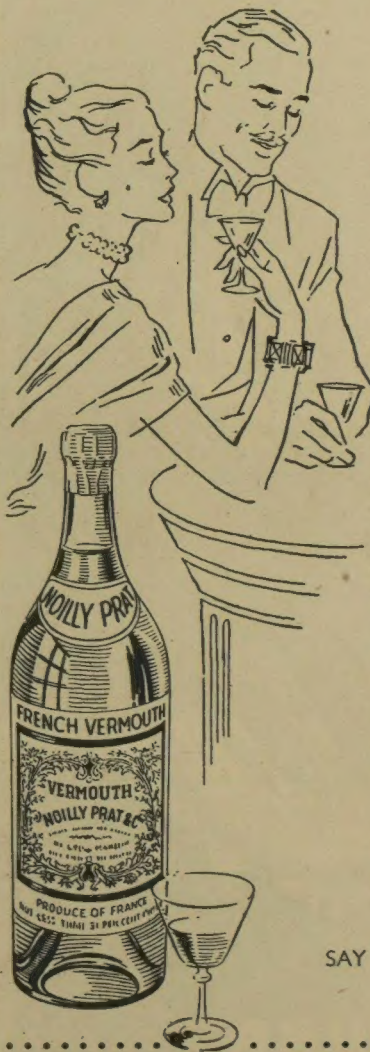
paternal manner and mellow voice..."

"I shall be fully occupied with the refreshments, sir. Three cases of Rose's Lime Juice arrived this morning."

"Pour me a large gin and Rose's now! I shall then face the future with reckless confidence, filling the young with innocent joy and promising Mrs. C. a repeat performance next year."

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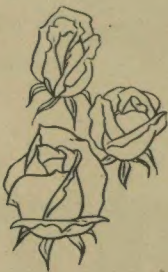
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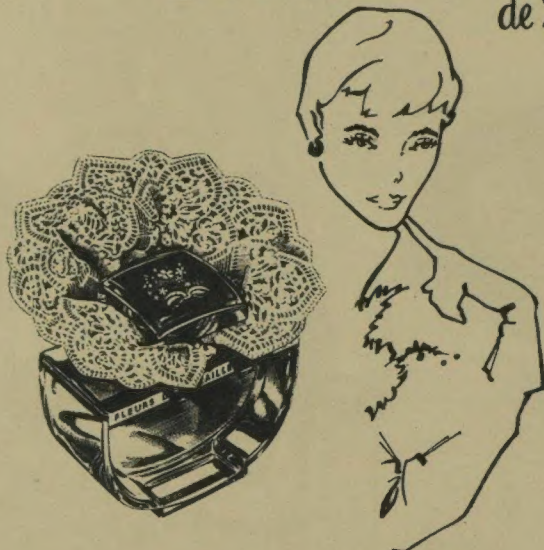
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Under a sky whose colour is a silvery variation on a theme of blue . . . High above the comfortable valley, but still as far as ever from the ancient, lonely peaks Content for a moment with oneself, with one another and even with all the world And for perfection one thing more—

NUMBER SEVEN



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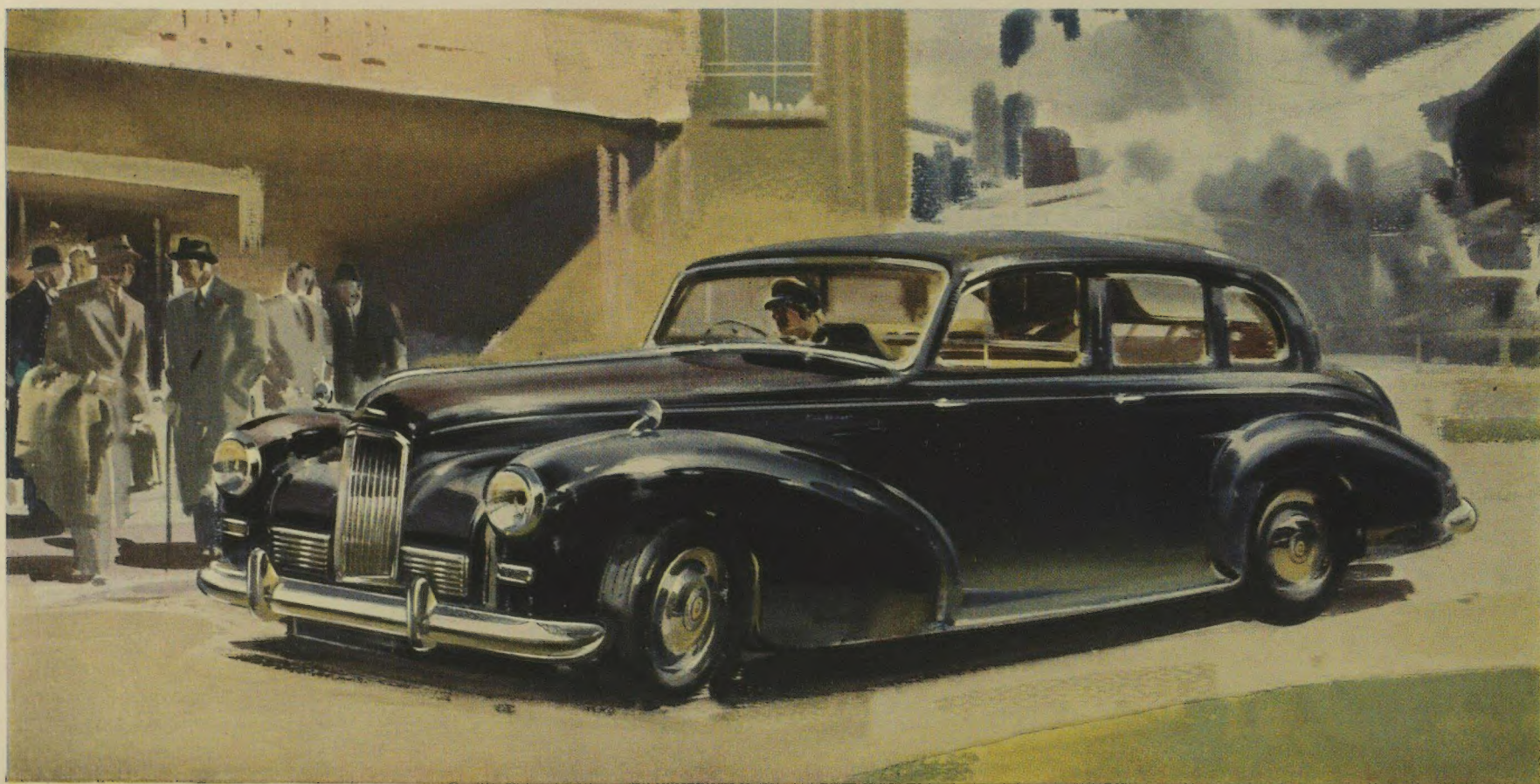
setting for quiet discussion with your associates ; and the magnificent

appearance of the car inspires immediate confidence. Relaxation . . .

convenience . . . prestige . . . and a surprisingly reasonable price.



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THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

CHRISTMAS NUMBER 1952



A MERRY CHRISTMAS, GOOD LUCK AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL.
From the painting, "Mummers" by Richard Eurich A.R.A.



MODERN TOYS IN A ROYAL PLAYROOM: THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER'S SONS WITH THEIR MODEL FARM AND MINIATURE AIRCRAFT. Prince William of Gloucester, born in 1941, shown alone in our upper picture and on the left in the group, has a well-stocked toy model farm. The aircraft with which he and his brother Prince Richard (born in 1944) are playing are from the miniature airport made for Prince William in Canberra. Colour photographs by Tom Blau.



"May I ask what you are doing here—and how you got in?" Fletcher turned. A girl had come down one of the alleyways leading into the glade and stood now a few yards from him. She wore an old pair of beach trousers and a sweater, and the breeze had taken her dark hair and tangled it over her forehead.

THE SLEEPING MAN

By VICTOR CANNING,

Author of "Venetian Bird" and "A Forest of Eyes."

Written specially for "The Illustrated London News" and illustrated by VICTOR BERTOGLIO.

IT had rained during the night. Now, under the late morning sunshine, everything was fresh-coloured and bright. Each olive leaf was spruce and trim and the fat, glossy orange-trees were dark, enamelled bosses studding the hillside. The pools of water in the roadside ditches threw back a pale turquoise-blue to the Italian sky. There was a smell, too; the smell of fresh, rain-slaked earth, the friendly tang of charcoal and wood from the *contadini's* cottages, and the faint trace of salt coming in from the sea across the marshes on the breast of a gentle west wind.

As he drove, John Fletcher was whistling an old Army tune, evoked by the war memories this road brought back to him. In those days it had been the road to Rome, the road towards home. Frascati, the Alban hills, Anzio away on his right. . . . Then, he had been a tank officer, not an architect, and his chief interest in Italian buildings had been concerned with their suitability as cover or quarters.

The road looped itself up the side of a hill, cut through a defile on the crest and broadened suddenly into a village square. He drew up by the church, beyond a line of market stalls. Across the square a frieze of drying maize cobs caught the sun, golden against the grey, flaking house-fronts. An old man was tightening the panniers on a small donkey by the church. From him Fletcher—who spoke Italian well—got directions for the Villa Carapacci.

The villa was only a few minutes out of the village and he found it easily. He drew up, and got out of the car. Through the wrought-iron double gates he could see the gravelled drive curving away through an avenue of cypresses. There was a glimpse of the house, red-pantiled roof, a corner of a portico and dark, shuttered windows in a long, elegant façade. He rang the bell. No one answered his ring. He rang again after a while, but there was still no sign of life from the villa or grounds. He tried the gate, but it was bolted and locked.

He went back to the car and, sitting on the running-board, lit himself a cigarette. The day was getting warm now, one of the errant summer days that stray into Italian Novembers at times. The light was good, ideal for photography, and he wanted studies of a fountain in the garden. Early that morning he had visited a *palazzo* on the outskirts of Rome and the fine weather had tempted him to come on to the Villa Carapacci. He cursed himself now for not having telephoned for an appointment. If he did not get in he was going to have a lot of wasted time on his hands.

He rose, slipped his Leica in his pocket, and began to follow the line of the wall up the hill from the lodge gates. The wall was about 10 ft.

high, and ridged with a line of tiles. Fifty yards from the gate he found a thick-stemmed growth of ivy growing up the wall. He made a foothold in the creeper and hauled himself to the top. There was only a short drop to the grounds on the other side.

Very shortly he was making his way through the gardens towards the villa. A terrace ran along one side of the house, its balustraded rail lined at intervals with tall *canephora*, holding great urns on their heads.

As he stood looking at the shuttered face of the villa, he caught the sound of running water. He moved away, down a flight of steps which led to a wide glade, backed on one side by a gothic arrangement of moss-padded rocks, and dark with a tall fringe of cypresses. A great spout of water burst from the top of the rocks and made its way noisily into a pool in the centre of the glade. In the middle of the pool was the fountain-group by Fuga for which he was looking.

He moved towards it out into the warm sunshine and, as he did so, a patch of blue caught his eyes from a stone bench that stood to one side of the pool.

Fletcher crossed to the bench carefully and smiled to himself. An elderly man was lying on it, asleep in the sun. He was tall, with a rather angular body, dressed in a faded blue shirt, dirty linen trousers and with leather sandals on his feet. He lay in an attitude of complete relaxation, one hand couching his head, the other trailing over the side of the bench, and he was snoring quietly. Here, Fletcher thought to himself, was the gate-keeper who should have answered the bell.

Even in repose the man's face had a smiling, puckish quality, and a vitality and intelligence which caught Fletcher's interest. He pulled out his Leica and took a couple of exposures of the man.

He turned away and began to make his studies of the fountain. It was a pleasant group of three lions on a raised centrepiece of marble. On each lion's back rode a naked boy. Water spouted from the mouths of the lions and a great plume of spray soared up between the boys' heads, rising high into the sunlight and then cascading upon their laughing faces. For a while Fletcher was happily absorbed in taking the group from different angles. He had almost finished when a voice sounded sharply from behind him.

"May I ask what you are doing here—and how you got in?" Fletcher turned.

A girl had come down one of the alleyways leading into the glade and stood now a few yards from him. She wore an old pair of beach trousers and a sweater, and the breeze had taken her dark hair and tangled it over her forehead. There was a smudge of garden dirt on

her chin and she carried a trug in which he could see secateurs and a bunch of rose clippings, the young buds just unfurling in a pale flame colour. About twenty-two, he said to himself, and untidy, but with a natural attractiveness that could take disorder and make it arresting. She was frowning and her dark eyes were angry.

"I'm sorry," he said, "I owe you an apology. I was most anxious to take some photographs of this fountain, and I climbed over the wall—"

"You mean you broke in?"

"Well," he gave her a smile, hoping to take the frown from her face. "'Broke in' is a hard phrase. You see, I couldn't get an answer at the gate. Your porter," he nodded towards the old man, "didn't hear the bell."

She glanced sharply at the old man on the bench, who had sat up at the sound of their voices.

"Peppino," she said, "I shall speak to my father if this happens again. Go back to your duties at once."

For a moment Fletcher thought the old man was going to argue with her. Then, with a slow, impudent smile at them both, he turned away and walked stiffly out of the glade.

Fletcher put his camera in his pocket and nodded towards the departing figure. "We're both in trouble. He for going to sleep and me for coming in without authority. But, please believe me, I am quite an innocent intruder. I'm an Englishman, John Fletcher, and I wanted some studies of this fountain for a book I'm writing on Late Italian Renaissance architecture. I couldn't make anyone hear—"

"It would have been better if you had written for an appointment, Mr. Fletcher, or telephoned . . ." The frown was fading now, but there was still a contained, watchful opposition.

"I agree—but I only decided to come on the spur of the moment."

"Come from where? Rome?"

"Yes." Her inquisitorial tone amused him. "The Hotel Ventura—you can telephone them if you like and verify my story."

She hesitated for a moment and then gave him a brief smile. "I don't think that will be necessary. I'm sorry, too, if I sounded rather sharp . . ."

"Please . . . I was the one in the wrong."

She made no objection to his taking a few more photographs, but she stayed with him.

He learned from her that she was the daughter of the owner of the villa, Admiral Vincenzo Carapacci.

When he had finished she walked with him to the gate and let him out.

"Good-bye, signorina," he said, and then, his mouth cornered with a smile, he added, "and thank you for not calling the police."

She laughed at that, the sound gay and carefree, the movement of her dark hair framed by the background of pale olive leaves and the arabesque of the iron gate.

"Good-bye, Mr. Fletcher—and don't break into any more gardens."

Lina Carapacci watched Fletcher drive off down the road. She then closed and locked the gateway and, smiling to herself, walked slowly up the gravelled drive. She went up the steps to the villa terrace and found Peppino waiting for her.

He looked at her, one eyebrow cocked, his greying hair loose and stirring in the wind, and said in English, teasingly, "So, now I am the gate-keeper, Lina?"

"We have to be careful. He was an Englishman. He might have recognised you."

"I doubt it." He came over and took her arm, leading her towards the villa. "You take your duties very seriously, Lina, cara."

"Someone has to look after you."

"Do you think so? I have managed very well for the last fifty-eight years . . ." He squeezed her arm affectionately and laughed. "Now from gate-keeper I shall change to cook, and we shall share an omelette and a bottle of Frascati."

For the next few days the weather was bad, with constant driving rain. Fletcher spent most of the time in his hotel, making up his notes and arranging his photographs. Some mornings later the hall porter brought up with his coffee and mail a complimentary copy of *Donne e Uomini*. *Donne e Uomini* was a national weekly picture magazine. The editor, an old wartime friend of Fletcher's, had arranged to develop and print his photographs for him. Seeing the study of the sleeping man amongst the last batch, he had liked it, and Fletcher had given it to him. In the magazine, marked for Fletcher's attention, was a picture page entitled "Sleep." There were studies of men, women and children in different attitudes of repose. It was with a certain tinge of pride that he saw his study of the elderly man amongst them and underneath it his own name. Some day, he thought, his name would be on the cover of a book. He lay there smoking and drinking his coffee and wondering how he would feel when his book was published. He was at peace with the world. The magazine had slipped to the floor and the Villa Carapacci was far from his thoughts.

At that moment, in a room above the wide stretch of the Lungo Tevere Testaccio, fronting the brown sweep of the Tiber, a man was standing at a window staring across at the ochre-and-pink huddle of houses and churches of the Trastevere quarter on the other side of the river. He was a bulky, fleshily-built man, dressed very precisely in a well-cut blue suit. His linen was immaculate, and he gave the impression of having come fresh from a barber's chair, the round, rather solemn face, pink and shining, the crisp dark hair laid back in a neat series of waves. He held a copy of *Donne e Uomini* in one hand.

There was a knock on the door of the room and a man came in.

"Signore Gambona—you wanted me?"

The man at the window turned slowly and for a moment he frowned, as though the appearance of the other annoyed him. Then he said curtly, "Yes, Manzo—I did." The voice was resonant and powerful.

Manzo came forward as the magazine was held out to him. He was a man of middle height, untidily dressed in a grey suit that looked as though he had slept in it. One wing of his crumpled shirt-collar escaped over the jacket lapel, and his shock of brown hair looked as though it had been combed with his fingers. The face was lean, the colour of faded parchment, and he had a habit of biting at his lower lip which gave him a grimacing, vicious expression.

"Look at the photograph I've marked—and then at the ones on the desk over there."

Signore Gambona nodded to the desk, then turned away to the window and lit himself a cigarette. He heard Manzo stir behind him, but his eyes were on the brown flood of the Tiber. A *carabiniere* strolled along the river-bank under the leafless trees and a flock of schoolboys came sweeping noisily by on bicycles.

Behind him Manzo said with a sudden touch of excitement in his voice, "It's him! It's the same man!"

"Of course. And this time we mustn't let him slip. He's in Italy still and we've got to have him. You lost him once—"

"But I had a man on him right up to the airport and then—"

"Your man was a fool!" The voice was hard, menacing. "Don't employ fools, Manzo. I don't—not for long, anyway."

Manzo was silent for a while. Then he came over to the window, the magazine still in his hands. He was looking at the photograph of the elderly sleeping man taken by Fletcher.

"Fletcher," he said. "That's not an Italian name . . . the man who took it?"

"American or English. Find him. Find out where the photograph was taken. But do it carefully."

The telephone in Fletcher's room rang. It was the hall porter.

"There is a Signore Rinale here, sir, who would like to see you."

"Rinale?" Fletcher knew no one of that name.

"Yes, sir."

"All right. I'm just coming down."

He had been working since the early morning. He hoped Signore Rinale would not keep him long, because he liked to have a stroll before lunch. He went down and found Rinale waiting for him in the hall.

Rinale was a short, rather harassed-looking little man whose hands moved nervously the whole time he talked. He was like a scared, nondescript bird tensed always for sudden flight. His face, however, was pleasant, and there was a quality about the man which roused a sympathy in Fletcher for him. After their first few words he felt he wanted to tell him to calm down, because no one was going to ill-treat him. They went into the bar where Rinale ordered a *negroni* for Fletcher and *aqua minerale* for himself.

He patted his waistcoat and said apologetically, "I have ulcers. It is a sign of the successful business man. . . . Ha, *Dio*—success, she is a hard horse to ride." He leaned forward across the table and gave Fletcher an engaging smile.

"Riding horses usually gives you callouses, not ulcers."

"How? Ah, yes. That is very good." He paused for a moment, as though considering whether there was any hidden meaning behind the joke, decided there was not, and went on. "Mr. Fletcher, I must explain myself. I am a publisher from Milan"—he pulled out a card and dropped it on the table. "I am here for a few days only, but I have seen the photograph you took in *Donne e Uomini*, and I am very interested. From the editor I have been given your address here, and I hope you can help me."

"How?"

"I am thinking of publishing a little book of photographic studies and this kind of photograph is just the type of thing I want. I should be pleased if you went through your photographs and picked me out any others of a similar nature and sent them to me . . ."

Nervous and ready for flight he might be, but Fletcher realised that he had no trouble in talking: words poured from him like a spring song. He would pay well, the publication would be a *de luxe* one, and it was quite clear that Fletcher had a great talent for capturing the noble beauty of the human face.

"This old man, now—one knows at once that he is Italian, a gardener or a porter; all his days have been toil, the seasons have weathered him and the days have worn him down. You must have been delighted the moment you saw him."

"I was indeed. It's a very fine face."

"Where did you find him? Perhaps we might get more studies of him?"

"He was asleep in the gardens of the Villa Carapacci. I went there to photograph a fountain by Fuga."

"The Villa Carapacci? Where is that? Near Rome?"

"Yes, it's near Frascati." He would like to go there again. He would like to see the girl again . . . dark, the wind teasing her hair, the finely-moulded, aristocratic face a little uncertain in expression between annoyance and . . . and what? There had been some odd quality in her anger which still puzzled him.

It was at this point that the hotel porter came into the bar and stood by him. He looked up enquiringly.

"There is a lady in the hall, signore, who would like to see you. She does not give her name."

He excused himself from Rinale and went into the hall. A woman was standing looking into one of the show-cases full of leather goods and the hall porter nodded towards her. As Fletcher went up to her she turned. It was Signorina Carapacci. But now she was quite a

different creature. The untidiness was gone. She stood there, very elegant in a green suit. In the lapel of her loose coat she wore a gardenia spray, and on her head was a small white cap. For a moment it was hard to reconcile the two women, and then he saw that on her face was still that odd expression which escaped his definition.

She came up to him and held out her hand.

"I have to talk to you, Mr. Fletcher. I want your help."

"Well, of course I'll do anything I can."

"I didn't realise that when you were at the villa you took some photographs of Peppino, but I've just seen one in *Donne e Uomini*. Mr. Fletcher, I want you to promise me that you will not tell anyone where that photograph was taken."

He saw her chin come up, a little stubborn movement which gave him the fleeting impression that somewhere deep within her she was forcing down her own fears.

"But—"

"Please. It is extremely important, to me and to many other people—". Something in his manner made her break off suddenly and she put out a hand and touched his arm. "You haven't told anyone already, have you?"

"Well . . ." Fletcher hesitated.

"Have you?" Her voice was urgent.

He nodded. "I am afraid you've come about five minutes too late."

Dismay clouded her face as he explained about Rinale, who was still waiting in the bar.

"Do you think this man is a genuine publisher from Milan?"

"Good gracious me! Why shouldn't he be? Look, what is all this about?"

"I'm sorry," she shook her head. "I can't tell you. You must accept that. I know it sounds silly and I can see it's beginning to irritate you—but it is important, and if I could tell you I would. But it is essential to me to know whether this man is genuine. Do you think I could meet him?"

"If that's what you want. You'd better come and have a drink with him. I'll say you're an old friend of mine. How shall I introduce you?"

"Not as Lina Carapacci. Please invent some other name. If he isn't genuine, I don't want him to know I'm from the Villa Carapacci."

Fletcher could not prevent himself smiling and, as he took her arm and led her into the bar, he said, "You sound as though you've stepped right out of a melodrama."

With Rinale she was charming. She was an old friend of Fletcher's who had just arrived in Rome from Florence. She was gay and attentive to Rinale and talked to him of friends she had in Milan, but Fletcher could sense that Rinale had become uncomfortable. He was obviously a man who became more scared and less sure of himself with women, and the wonderful flow of words dwindled away. Very soon he made an excuse to leave them.

The moment Rinale was out of the bar, Lina rose quickly.

"Well?" Fletcher gave her a grin. "What do you think of him?"

"He's not genuine. I talked to him about publishing friends of mine in Milan and he pretended to know them. He couldn't have done—they don't exist. I've got to follow him."

Fletcher gave her a puzzled frown.

"Are you really serious?"

She turned on him, her lips tight, a tiny flare of anger in her eyes, and when she spoke her words were crisp, icy.

"Of course I am! However, I'm not asking for any further help from you. You've done enough damage."

She was almost out of the hall before he caught her up.

"I'm sorry—" he held her arm, turning her round. "If I have caused trouble, I should help. If you're going to follow strange men, I'll come with you."

Fletcher's chief impression of the next hour was that he had strayed into a fantasy. The girl Lina was real enough, the smell of her gardenia, the busy streets of Rome, the swirl of traffic, the loitering crowds on the pavements and groups sipping *apéritifs* at the cafés . . . all were real, but somehow out of focus.

Rinale was just driving off in a taxi as they reached the hotel entrance. Fortunately, Fletcher's car was parked outside and he took Lina to it. The next five minutes proved to him something he had always suspected: that following another car in a crowded city was difficult and highly dangerous. However, by taking risks and breaking several traffic regulations, he managed to keep fairly close to the taxi. It was with some relief that he saw the taxi draw up outside a bar in the Piazza Barberini. He drove his small car round the square and parked on the far side of the Fountain of Tritons. Lina left him and went across the piazza. After a few minutes she came back.

"He's telephoning inside."

"Probably calling his office in Milan. Then he's going to have lunch."



He struck out madly, and the struggle seemed to last an eternity. His desperation heightened time, movement and menace into a fantasy. Arms tightened round him, trying to still his blows, a foot smashed against his knee, drawing an angry sob of pain from him.

"He's got no office in Milan."

"He might have. If an attractive girl began to talk to me about architects in London whom I knew did not exist, I might humour her. That's what he did to you."

"I'm sure he did not!"

"Sorry. Hullo—there he is now."

Rinale had come out of the bar and was walking along the far side of the piazza. They got out of the car and followed him at a safe distance. Rinale, unhurriedly, went across the square and into the Via del Tritone. He stopped at a kiosk and bought himself a paper. Then he walked on, turning the pages as he went. It was easy for them to follow unobserved for there were plenty of people about. Some way down the Via del Tritone he swung off to the left along the Via della Stamperia and they had to hurry to keep him in sight. They turned the corner to see him half-way down the street and, at that moment, he disappeared into a side alley. Lina began to run and Fletcher followed her.

When they reached the mouth of the alley it was to find that it was a dead-end and deserted. The whole of one side was taken up by the offices and works of a printing establishment. On the other side was a narrow garden with tall iron railings and a padlocked gate, and beyond it a low building with a single doorway. Over the doorway was a run of neon tubing, unilluminated, which spelled the word "Apollodoro." The doorway was painted a shabby red and, flanking it, were framed photographs of cabaret artists.

"Well"—Fletcher looked at Lina—"you've got a choice." He tried the door of the night club as he spoke, but it was locked. "He's either in the night club, the printing works, or the little garden over there. I say the printing works. He's a publisher after all."

"I'm certain he's not a publisher. That story about wanting to use your photographs was nonsense—"

"Oh, I don't know. I take very good photographs."

"Please . . . this is serious." She was silent for a moment and then, almost to herself, she said: "He took a taxi to get to a telephone. But after that he was in no hurry. I wonder whom he telephoned . . . ?"

"I could help more if I knew more."

"You've been very kind, and I'm sorry I haven't been more appreciative. But I can't tell you anything. I must get back to the villa right away. I've got to make sure Peppino's all right."

"I was rather hoping you'd stay and have lunch with me."

They were walking back towards the Via del Tritone now.

"I haven't time for lunch. I must get back to Frascati." Her voice sounded overwrought.

Fletcher, who liked her and wanted to help her, said: "In that case, I'll go without lunch, too, and drive you out to Frascati."

They did not talk much as they drove out of Rome. Fletcher realised that she was impatient to get to the villa, and he drove as quickly as he could. Now and again he glanced across at her. She had taken off her hat and the wind blew through her hair, drawing it back in a smooth, black sweep. It was a fine, sensitive face, the soft red lips taut now with the anxiety which he could not share, because he did not understand it.

It was unfortunate that half-way to the villa the car had a puncture, and he had to walk back to a garage to borrow a jack. He worked quickly to replace the wheel. Lina helped him as much as she could, and he could sense in all her movements her mounting impatience against the delay.

When they started again, he said: "Why don't you tell me what this is all about? If I knew, perhaps I could help you more."

She was silent for a moment. Then she looked across at him and the tension of the mouth relaxed a little as she smiled. "You're being very helpful now. I'm grateful to you. But, please, don't ask me questions I can't answer."

The gates of the villa were open when they arrived. Fletcher drove up the gravelled drive and stopped under the terrace at the front of the house. As soon as the car had drawn up, Lina was out and running up the steps. Fletcher followed her. They went into a wide, marble-tiled hall from which a wrought-iron stairway led to the upper floors. Lina paused in the hallway.

"Peppino!" she called. "Peppino!"

Her voice echoed hollowly about the lofty hall, but there was no answer. Without a word to Fletcher she turned and raced up the stairway and along a corridor. She stopped before a green-painted door and called: "Peppino—are you there?"

When there was no reply, Fletcher suggested: "He may be asleep—or in the garden."

She shook her head, her face drawn with serious lines, and pushed the door open. In the room was a little silk-canopied bed, and a sandalwood wardrobe and chest. A small table under the window was strewn with paper and books and to one side of it stood a typewriter. A piece of paper signalled whitely from the machine. Lina went over to it and drew it out.

Fletcher watched her as she read. He saw her face go grave, saw the sudden tremulous movement of her lips and then slowly she sat down on the edge of the bed, staring at the paper in her hands. A great tenderness awakened in him for her. He went to her and put his hand on her shoulder.

"What's happened, Lina?"

Silently she handed the paper to him and he read it.

"Lina cara,

"I have a problem to think over and am going away for a day or so. Don't worry. Everything is all right. I will telephone you to-morrow. F.L."

Fletcher handed the note back to her and said: "Who's F.L.? Peppino?"

She nodded and then stood up suddenly and moved agitatedly towards the window. He heard her say, almost angrily: "He shouldn't have done this to me. . . . He couldn't have done it. Something's wrong."

He went to her. "What do you mean? Look"—he turned her round gently and held her by the shoulders—"Lina—I don't know what all this is about. But I can see how much you're upset. Why don't you tell me about it? Come on," he smiled, the pressure of his hands on her shoulders tightening a little, "it always helps to talk. . . ."

He saw the hesitation in her. Then she moved away from him and, looking out of the window, she said: "Perhaps I should. . . . I am worried, terribly worried. . . . You see," she turned towards him, "Peppino is really Doctor Francis Longman." She paused, as though she expected him to be surprised, but he said nothing and she went on: "Doesn't that mean anything to you?"

"I'm afraid it doesn't. He's English?"

"Yes. I'm sure something's happened to him. . . . Oh, I'm sure of it!"

It took him some time to get the story from her. Doctor Francis Longman was a celebrated bacteriologist engaged on work of the highest national importance and he had come to Italy a month before to consult with an Italian scientist who was too ill to travel. He was a man who hated to be accompanied by security guards. In fact, the year before, he had gone to France and had deliberately slipped his guards. For a while it was thought he had been abducted and there had been a lot of publicity. In the end, he had quietly turned up in Paris, declaring that he had a right to some private life.

"But why should you be so worried about him now?"

"Because he's my responsibility. My father is a naval attaché at the Italian Embassy and we have known Peppino for years. I was asked to come with him on this trip and look after him. The visit was quite secret—but now I'm sure someone has got hold of him."

"I see. You mean someone may have recognised the photograph I took?"

"Yes."

Fletcher shook his head. "I think you're worrying about nothing. The note explains everything. He's gone off again."

"But why should he? It's just the thing he knows would worry me. I think the note is false."

"Why?"

"It's typed and it's signed F.L."

"Doesn't he usually do that?"

"Well . . . he never has left me a note before. But I'm sure he would sign it 'Peppino.'"

"Lina . . ." He wanted to share her fears but it was impossible. "Honestly, I think you're making too much of it. After all, if he was in danger of being abducted they would never have sent him alone with you—"

"Don't you see? That was the whole point. We came secretly. And they knew he'd never slip off as he did in France while I was with him. . . . No, something's happened to him."

There was no mistaking her certainty and because he hated to see her upset he became practical and forced himself to assume that her fears were justified, in order to help her.

"In that case we must do something about it, right away."

He suggested that she should go to the police, but she was against that, because—the possibility could not be overlooked—if Peppino had genuinely gone off she might start the same sort of unwelcome publicity, the very thing she was anxious to avoid. He persuaded her that she must go to the British Embassy in Rome, where the details of her visit to Italy with Peppino were known, and tell them what had happened.

He drove her back to Rome and waited for her outside the Embassy. When she came out, he could see at once that she was happier.

"Well?"

She smiled. "They think I'm worrying too much. However, they're going to check on Rinale, and they suggest we wait until to-morrow to see if Peppino telephones. They're like me—they don't want to start anything in a hurry, in case it's all nonsense. They're telephoning someone in Milan to go round and check on Rinale's business address. He's listed in the directory, but there's no answer from the number."

"I'm not surprised. It's eight o'clock. Even publishers go home to eat and sleep. I think, too, it's time we ate. I don't seem to remember having any lunch. After you've eaten I'll drive you back."

He took her to the Albergo del Orso, where they shared a bottle of *Soave*, had *scampi* and then *tornedos* with young asparagus-tips. Although his Italian currency was limited, he gave little thought to the expense of the meal. He would eat at a *pizzeria* for the rest of the week.

When they came out it was late and there was a moon riding high above the Tiber and the Castello San Angelo. They walked up the side of the river for a little way, a thin breeze stirring the bare branches of the trees, the occasional sweep of a car's headlights picking out the dark trunks, and Fletcher held her arm. It was years since he had walked under the moon with a girl. Since the war there had been a lot of leeway to make up in his profession and time had always crowded in on him. Even here in Italy he had found little time to relax, worrying and working at his book, feeling always indebted to his partner in London who had magnanimously forced him to come to Rome and get the book out of his system. Lina was very silent and he guessed that she was worrying about Peppino.

After a while she said, "Rinale might have something to do with that night-club."

[Continued on page 19.]



SPRING FLOWERS WHICH SHAKESPEARE LOVED AND CITED: "THE GREEN LAP OF THE NEW COME SPRING."

The first flowers of the year to be noted by Shakespeare are daffodils (8) that "take the winds of March with beauty." Then the daisy (18), whose petals are "a perfect white," in company with primroses (14), "dim" and "faint," and violets (15), "sweet and endearing." The lady smocks (10) "paint the meadows with delight," and then make way for the cowslip (12), the fairies' own flower. The azure harebells (1), known as bluebells to-day, carpet the ground under the hazel bushes, and ere long whole pastures are golden with cuckoo buds (7) or buttercups. "Long purples" (9), the wild orchids, grow thickly in

early May, with golden nettles (yellow archangel) (5), daisies, crowflowers (17), or ragged robin nowadays. Then gleams the water-loving kingcup, the marybuds (16), followed by the yellow iris, the "vagabond flag" (6) upon the stream. Oxlips (4) are passing, and in gardens there grows the high crown imperial (2) in company with the white narcissus (11). Tall purple columbines (3) bloom in the woods, and the hedges are white with hawthorn (20) or may. The small heartsease, "purple with love's wound" (13), can be found in shady places, and on the banks in warm sunshine the wild thyme (19) blows.

(1) Cymbeline. (2) Winter's Tale. (3) Hamlet. (4) Midsummer Night's Dream. (5) Hamlet. (6) Antony and Cleopatra. (7) Love's Labour's Lost. (8) Winter's Tale. (9) Hamlet. (10) Love's Labour's Lost. (11) Two Noble Kinsmen. (12) Midsummer Night's Dream. (13) Midsummer Night's Dream. (14) Winter's Tale. (15) Henry V. (16) Cymbeline. (17) Hamlet. (18) Lucrece. (19) Midsummer Night's Dream. (20) King Lear.

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FLOWERS OF EARLY SUMMER MENTIONED BY SHAKESPEARE IN HIS PLAYS: "THE SUMMER'S FLOWER IS TO THE SUMMER SWEET."

Summer blooms are ushered in by the lilies, the flower de luce (2) being one. This is the white Florentine iris. Then the "pure unsullied lily" (11), the Madonna, was a great favourite in every monastery garden. The blue of the larks' heels (6), known to-day as "larkspurs," brought bright contrast to the pinks (20), so called from their serrated edges. The globe-like peony (7) forms a small bush and the camomile (17), with its finely-cut foliage and star-like daisies, made soft tread for the paths. The perfume was as welcome as the sweet scent of the roses. These loved flowers were in Shakespeare's day many and various. The red rose of Provence (15), carried from France, bore a hundred petals, and the damask rose (18), or damascene, was pink or cream in colour and of a great

sweetness. The York and Lancaster rose (19) came into blossom after the cessation of the Wars of the Roses and combined both the red and the white emblems of the opposing armies. The holy thistle (13), named benedictus, was a great healer, as was the rosy mallow (5) inhabiting the countryside. Mustard (3) was raised for man's use, as also was flax (16), with its fragile blossoms of shimmering blue. Clover (12), too, was grown and gave food for sheep, as did the vetch (1) for the oxen. The smoky fumitory (8) was a wayside plant, and the burrs (10) also, which stick. Very poisonous is the henbane (4), any part of which, if swallowed, provokes delirium. The branches of the wild rose (9) stretch out over the hedgerows and a perfume of almonds rises from the sovereign-gold of the broom (14).

(1) Tempest. (2) Winter's Tale. (3) Henry IV. Part II. (4) Macbeth. (5) Tempest. (6) Two Noble Kinsmen. (7) Tempest. (8) King Lear. (9) Much Ado About Nothing. (10) Troilus and Cressida. (11) Two Gentlemen of Verona. (12) Henry V. (13) Much Ado About Nothing. (14) Othello. (15) Hamlet. (16) King Lear. (17) Henry IV. Part I. (18) As You Like It. (19) Henry VI. Part I. (20) Romeo and Juliet.

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SHAKESPEARE'S FLOWERS OF THE HIGH SUMMER DAYS: "THE MIDDLE SUMMER'S SPRING" AND "SUMMER'S VELVET BUDS."

Late summer brings into bloom the herbs so much used in the sixteenth century in culinary arts. The small garden was given over to them, and we find the scented marjoram (13), with its little flowers of deep rose. The spearmint (15a) grows near, and throws up a pale, grey-blue spike of blossom, much visited by the bees. The brilliant marigold (15) adds its company, and the petals were put into soups and broths, so that it was called "pot" marigold. For the linen cupboard there flowered the lavender (5) and became one of the cries of London. Bushes of rosemary (12), quite rugged in growth, were culled as a beauty aid for the hair, and there for a strong disinfectant was the lemon-toned rue (11), with its blue-grey foliage. Fennel (4), tall and feathery, came to the table, served with fish,

and the saffron crocus (20) gave colouring to the pies. The myrtle (7), with its pure white blossoms, was trained on a south wall and the poisonous aconite (3) rose at the back of the bed in stately grace. The opium poppy (6), of purple grey, yielded its seed-vessels for an opiate, and the pretty pansy (16) grew along the edge of the path. Carnations (8) grew in their glory, with their cousins, the "streak'd gillyvors" (9), against a low hedge of the apple-scented eglantine (19). Out on the common one found the ling (17) and heath (18), and in the cornfields the lovely but troublesome cockle (10). The royal purple thistle (2) covered the waysides, and in sheets of warm yellow stood the "pricking" gorse (1). The woodbine (14), the sweet honeysuckle, was triumphant in the hedgerows.

(1) Tempest. (2) Midsummer Night's Dream. (3) Romeo and Juliet. (4) Henry IV. Part II. (5) Winter's Tale. (6) Othello. (7) Measure for Measure. (8) Winter's Tale. (9) Winter's Tale. (10) Love's Labour's Lost. (11) Richard II. (12) Hamlet. (13) King Lear. (14) Midsummer Night's Dream. (15) Pericles. (15a) Winter's Tale. (16) Hamlet. (17) All's Well. (18) Tempest. (19) Cymbeline. (20) Winter's Tale.

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THE FRUIT BLOSSOM AND RIPENED FRUITS OF SHAKESPEARE'S WORLD: "BEAUTEOUS SPRINGS
TO YELLOW AUTUMN TURNED."

Many fruits were known to Shakespeare. Even apricots (6) grew on a warm south wall in an English garden, and he refers to them as "yon dangling apricocks" (6). The first blossom to appear was on the crab-tree (4), or the wild apple. This is mentioned more than once and the fruit was eaten when roasted and dropped into bowls of ale. Then the strawberry (2), which he found growing underneath the nettle; doubtless this was the woodland variety. The cherry (10) is heralded by a host of beautiful white blossoms, ere they yield to the fruit, red and juicy, and the plum (9) in similar fashion. The

gooseberry (3), known as "crossberry," was handled in the kitchen, and late summer brings to ripeness the blackberry (8), clustered on thorny, spreading branches so familiar, as to "hang a poet's elegies" upon them. The quince (5), or coyne-tree, provides fruit for the pies and is referred to as the "stomach's comforter." The wise tree, being the latest to flower, is the mulberry (1), so much loved by the poet that he planted one in his private garden at Stratford. Nuts ripen until the leaves fall and the filbert (7), or bearded hazel, had its place high among them, as the oil from it was much needed and prized.

(1) Coriolanus. (2) Henry V. (3) Henry IV. Part II. (4) Coriolanus. (5) Romeo and Juliet. (6) Richard II. (7) Tempest. (8) Romeo and Juliet. (9) Merry Wives of Windsor. (10) Midsummer Night's Dream.

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THE SLEEPING MAN—Continued from page 14.]

"If it'll ease your mind," he suggested, "we'll go and have a look at the place."

"I would like that."

He put her in the car and drove back into the city. A little later he turned into the alleyway of the Via delle Stamperia. At the far end of the alley, the neon sign of the Apollodoro threw a red pool of light against the shadows.

"I can dance anything but a samba," he warned her.

She laughed, and he could tell that she was glad they had come.

There was a commissionaire in a green uniform much too tight for him at the door.

Fletcher said to him, "I'm looking for Signore Rinale. Is he here yet?"

"Rinale? I do not know the name, signore. Is he a regular client?"

"I think so."

The commissionaire smiled and shook his head.

They went down a long flight of stone steps into what at some time had been wine vaults. Most of the supporting pillars had been removed. The low roof was draped with dusty folds of dark crimson satin, from which hung small lanterns whose feeble light struggled against the cigarette-smoke that rose from the crowd around the dance floor. On a gallery to one side of the club was a dance band, led by a tall negro. They found a table and ordered a bottle of *Asti Spumante*. When the waiter brought it, Fletcher said:

"I'm looking for a Signore Rinale—do you know him?"

"No, signore. What does he look like?"

For a moment Fletcher hesitated. How could he describe Rinale? He tried. He was short, he was worried-looking, and his hair was a little grey.

"He's a bit like a fluttery, nervous bird, always waiting for the bang of a gun."

The waiter grinned and then looked round the club. With a pleasant contempt in his voice, he indicated the crowd. "It is a zoo. The signore will pardon—but it is a zoo. Everyone here resembles a bird or an animal. It is a thing I have remarked to my wife about the clients. For the *spumante*, signore—that is two thousand lire. No, I do not know your Signore Rinale. *Grazie*, signore."

When he was gone, Lina looked at Fletcher and smiled. "Waiters have a low opinion of human beings. One can hardly blame them."

They danced. As they moved around the floor Fletcher kept his eyes open for Rinale, but without success. The people there were very mixed, some in evening dress, and others in lounge suits. Their laughter was brittle, overdone, the whole atmosphere in which they moved touched by a feverish, fixed excitement.

For a while the floor was cleared for the cabaret show. It was like many Fletcher had seen: a line of dancing girls, not quite in step, breathing rather heavily, a gypsy singer, then three men dressed as British, American and French soldiers, exchanging a dreary succession of jokes about Marshall Aid and the Atlantic Treaty.

Lina put her hand on his and said, "We're not going to find Rinale here. I'm beginning to think you're right about him. Let's go when the cabaret's over."

The last act came on. There were two people dressed in tights and leather wrist-bands, a strong man and his female assistant. The strong man was tall, padded with enormous muscles, wearing a yellow wig and a great curling moustache. His assistant was thin and weedy, her lank black hair straggling in rats' tails to her narrow shoulders, and her whole manner one of great gloom. There was a great deal of husband-and-wife bickering between them as they prepared for their act. They were quite funny and, for the first time, Fletcher and Lina found themselves laughing together as the strong man failed to lift his bars and his under-sized wife did it for him.

When the act came to an end the club was noisy with applause. As Lina and Fletcher clapped their hands the couple bowed low to the audience, then to each other and, straightening up, whipped off their disguises.

For a moment Fletcher and Lina went on clapping, laughing still. Then the laughter went from them. The strong man stood now revealed as a big, soft-faced woman, and the wife as a small, thin man.

Fletcher felt Lina's hand on his. Then without a word, they were both on their feet.

The little man of the act was unmistakably Rinale.

Rinale was standing before a long make-up bench when they entered. He was in trousers and shirt and was frowning as he adjusted a coloured bow-tie in a cracked mirror. Under the naked light of the bulb over the mirror his face was a pale, biscuit colour and the greying hair dusty and lustreless. The room was untidy and smelt of smoke and cheap powder. From behind a screen in one corner the woman's face appeared, large and flaccid, the bushy mass of blonde hair giving her the impression of an untidy lioness.

Rinale recognised them at once in the mirror. He stood there without turning or speaking. Down the corridor outside the dressing-room came the muted sound of the band and a faint echo of voices. Fletcher put out a hand and closed the door. As he did so, the woman, raising her arms to slip a dress over her head, asked petulantly of Rinale, "*Sono i vostri amici, Guido?*"

Guido turned and, relieving his own embarrassment or fear, snarled at her: "Hurry up—we've only got five minutes."

Fletcher came forward and said firmly: "Of course we're friends of Guido's. Aren't we, Guido?"

Guido for a second found courage to smile. "I hope so, signore."

What can I do for you? You must be quick. Mara and I are on again in a few minutes." As he spoke he slipped into a jacket, the shoulders padded, the waist narrowed. He stood there, a rather faded yet oddly elegant figure.

"You've got time to answer a few questions. So your name isn't Rinale?"

There was an exclamation from behind the screen and the woman's voice came irritably to them: "Rinale? What have you been doing now, Guido?"

Guido ignored her and answered: "No, signore. It is Ponzio, Guido Ponzio."

"Not a publisher, either?"

"No, signore." Then, a little proudly, he added: "I am an actor."

"Guido, have you been up to your monkey tricks again?" Mara's voice was sharp with shrewish alarm.

"Shut up!" Guido made an apologetic movement of his arms towards Fletcher and Lina. "You come at a bad moment, signore. In a moment we are on again. I hope you will not be angry with me because of my little joke. This is a sordid life"—he indicated the room—"and sometimes I like to pretend I am not what I am." Talking began to give him courage and intention. "Who has not tried to make a daydream real? An unhappy actor . . . so for a while I play at being a publisher from Milan. At heart, you see, signore, I am a boy."

Mara came from behind the screen in an evening dress and turned her back to Guido. "Do me up." Over her shoulder she snapped: "So you lied to me. Is it this day-dream that suddenly put two thousand lire in your pocket to-day?"

Mechanically Guido began to fasten her dress. "Quiet, Mara. You do not understand."

"Who paid you the two thousand—and for what?" It was Lina, and Fletcher could hear the tension in her voice. The discovery of Guido had brought back all her anxieties.

"Do not believe a word he says, signorina," said Mara. "He lies as naturally as the smoke goes upwards. If it is more trouble, then this time I am finished with you. Do not expect Mara to pick you out. Who paid you the two thousand?"

Guido pushed her away and, picking up a straw hat from the bench, put it on his head and turned to the mirror to adjust the angle. Over his shoulder he mumbled pathetically:

"Signore, we are on. I cannot stop here to talk."

Fletcher pursed his lips. He put out a hand and swung Guido round. "Who paid you, Guido? And what for?"

Guido hesitated for a second, then gave in. "It was a man."

Mara laughed waspishly. "That is a good beginning. It commits no one."

"I do not know him. He comes up to me in a café-bar. It is very dark in there and I am a little drunk. . . . He wants to find out where is taken this photograph of yours. Almost I refused, because I had a feeling he was not honest and—"

The rest of his words were lost in an outburst from Mara.

"So, I was a fool to think you would go straight. *Dio*—why have I put up with you so long—" She raised her hand and smacked him on the face. Guido's lips tightened, but he made no protest. Mara turned to Lina and her face was suddenly serious. "Signorina, it is true what he says. We must go on. If you keep him here the manager will be angry. We may lose our jobs. That is no light matter. But for Guido, I will make this promise. When we have finished you will come back and finish with him. He shall tell you everything. This business is serious, eh?"

"Very serious."

"*Va bene*—if he is difficult we shall call a *carabiniere*. He is too wise to lie to a policeman."

There was a loud knocking on the door and a man's voice sang out: "Hurry, you pigeons!"

Fletcher looked at Lina. She gave him a little nod.

An uneasy smile came back to Guido's face. "*Grazie*, signore. It will be as Mara says."

Fletcher and Lina went back to their table. As they sat down, Mara and Guido, backed by a line of swaying chorus girls, were singing a duet. Despite the seriousness of their discovery, Fletcher could not dispose of the warm feeling he had for Guido.

Lina said: "It is no good relying on his word. The best thing to do is to take him to the police or the Embassy. I don't trust him."

Signore Gamboina leaned back in his chair. For some time he stared at Manzo without saying anything. He was thinking how much he paid Manzo a week—quite a lot. And from thinking of Manzo's salary, he went on to think about money generally. In his business he could never budget ahead, never quite know what overheads he was justified in carrying. He began to grumble aloud. "The old people at Il Praterello. . . . What will that be? A couple of days at the most—say three. Five thousand lire. They will keep their mouths shut, too. Then there's Arma at Chioggia. There won't be any cutting down on him. He's too important. . . . a shipper." He sighed gently. "It would be nice to be in real business. Arma must fix the boat. After that, it's out of our hands."

"When will the old man get to Praterello?"

"To-morrow morning. I've told Bastini to leave him there and then go on to Arma. We'll go up to-morrow. Pity, it's meant using two cars. Still, I don't see how we could have avoided it. What did you pay Rinale?"

"Rinale. . . . oh, Guido." The edge of a wolfish smile showed for a moment about Manzo's lips. "Five thousand—it was a ticklish job."

Gambona reached for his wallet and counted out three one-thousand-lire notes. He pushed them across the desk.

"You don't fool me, Manzo. Three thousand. You probably paid him two, but you're entitled to a commission."

"How long have we got—before the trouble starts?"

"Three, maybe four days, but that's all we need. Arma won't be able to arrange a boat any quicker. The note that was left should hold the girl for a day, maybe two."

Gambona was silent for a while, wondering to himself whether he could push them to a higher figure than the one fixed. He was not sure. They could be hard . . . and it might lead to trouble in the future.

The telephone rang and disturbed his thoughts. He picked it up, and as he listened, his face began to cloud. When he replied, his voice was curt and vicious. "Guido, you're a clumsy fool! There's only one way to do this, otherwise you'll see the inside of the Coeli Regina. Those two are dangerous. Mara must help. . . . What? . . . Of course she'll help. She'll suffer as much as you if she doesn't. . . ."

He went on, his voice dominating, giving his instructions. Manzo relapsed into his chair, biting gently at his lower lip.

The second part of the cabaret show lasted half an hour and in that time Mara and Guido were on and off the whole while. Once they were off so long that Fletcher was about to rise and make his way to their room, but at that moment they came on again to join in the finale.

As soon as the dance music started and couples rose to invade the small circle of floor, Fletcher took Lina's hand and began to move towards the small door that led to the dressing-rooms. They went through the door and up a small flight of steps into the dimly-lit corridor outside the dressing-rooms. They were met by Mara, her evening dress looped up over one arm, as she came hurriedly towards them.

"Signore"—her face was angry, her large bosoms heaving like a sea taken with a restless swell as she breathed hard. "He has gone this moment. *Malandrino!* I could not hold him. But if you are quick you will catch him. This way."

She took Lina's arm and began to run down the corridor. She pushed open a door and they crossed a large room full of dancing-girls, who turned and watched them in curiosity. One of them shouted:

"Eh, Mara—you will have to run fast to catch Guido. He is away to another woman!"

Mara shot a stream of abuse over her shoulder and swept Lina and Fletcher through another door and down a curved flight of steps that led into the foyer at the main club door.

"There he is!" she cried, as she ran into the street.

She pointed up the alleyway. The straw hat of Guido shone under a street lamp. He was just getting into a taxi.

"Follow him, signore."

Mara watched Fletcher and Lina run across the alley to his car. As they drove off, she turned wearily back into the club, the false anger gone from her, her face thoughtful, unhappy.

Turning out into the Via del Tritone Fletcher found the taxi was about a hundred yards ahead of them.

"The moment we get our hands on him we'll take him to the Embassy." He glanced at his watch as he drove. It was half-past two. "Will there be anyone there?"

Lina nodded. "I know where to take him." She glanced across at him. "I'm glad you're with me. But I'm giving you so much trouble. . . ."

He shook his head. "Don't worry about me. I'm enjoying it." Then, seeing her face, he said quickly: "Sorry—I know it's serious now. But it's going to be all right."

The taxi turned right, off the Via del Tritone, and a little while later was going down the broad, deserted run of the Via Nazionale. It was here that Guido must have realised that he was being followed. The speed of the taxi increased and it suddenly turned sharp left, taking one of the roads that ran south down towards the Colosseum. After a time it turned right into a maze of little streets about the Via Cavour. But now, unhampered by traffic, Fletcher found it easy to keep on its tail. Finally it turned into the Via Dei Fori Imperiali and went at full speed towards the Colosseum. It pulled up two hundred yards ahead of them, and Fletcher saw Guido leap out of the taxi, pause for a moment as he paid the man off, and then—as the taxi moved away—begin to run towards the great, towering bulk of the Colosseum. Fletcher pulled into the kerb. He leaped out, Lina following him.

"He's going to try and lose us in the Colosseum. Come on!"

He began to run across the wide stretch of the piazza towards the black-arched and colonnaded façade of the Colosseum. Ahead of them they could see Guido, hatless now, an insect-like figure, scurrying towards the shadowed arcades of the gigantic ruin.

The street lights in the great avenues converging on the piazza were still burning. But it was late and there was no sign of life except the hurrying figure of Guido, now slipping into the shadow of the Colosseum. Great banks of cloud were rising in the night sky, obscuring the moon, and a cold wind had wakened. A flurry of rain struck across their faces as they ran.

They followed Guido into the ruin and heavy darkness closed over them. Coming out under a little archway, they paused, the darkness defeating their eyes. They stood there, listening, and for a moment there was only the sound of their own breathing and the cold, unfriendly lisp of the wind over the tumbled stones and walls. The moon slipped out from behind a cloud and they saw the grey stones and weed-grown tiers of benches rising grim and deserted around them. Then, from their left, came the sound of a stone, loosened by someone moving.

"This way." Fletcher started forward.

The moon was gone now and they moved along the rim of the amphitheatre, stumbling, their steps uncertain in the darkness. Fletcher began to realise that their hunt might be fruitless. Guido probably knew this place like the back of his hand, but to them it was a maze. He paused again, listening, and then, distinct from the sound of his own breathing and the night wind, he heard the stealthy sound of cloth rustling and the long sigh of someone breathing yet trying to control a hunger for breath. He darted forward, glimpsing for a moment a paleness in the dark before him. The paleness faded from him and he raced on, found himself in a narrow archway and, as the moon emerged slowly from clouds, saw Guido standing, pressed against the wall of the arch vaulting. Seeing them, Guido turned as if to run, but Fletcher leapt forward and had his hands on him. Guido struggled and his arm came up, striking desperately. Fletcher held him, beat down his arm and muttered:

"Don't be a fool, Guido! You can't get away."

The resistance went from Guido and in the returning darkness his voice, frightened and uncertain, came to Fletcher: "Signore . . . please. Leave me alone. I have done nothing wrong."

Fletcher took a grip on the man's jacket front and shook him gently. "You're coming with us, Guido—and you're going to tell us everything you know. Everything—"

"John—look out!" Lina cried urgently.

He turned and was aware of other figures crowding in on them from behind. In the darkness he was suddenly encompassed with a press of arms and bodies. A fist crashed into his chest and he stumbled, falling, his hands grasping at the rough walling of the arch. He heard Lina shout again and then the cry choke to silence. He tried to rise, but a body hurtled against him and he felt hands reach out for his throat. Desperately, he lashed out and felt his fist smash into flesh, heard a sharp grunt of anger and pain and then, twisting away over the ground, he jumped to his feet.

The moon slid solemnly into view again. Momentarily the scene was printed in cold blacks and greys before his eyes, the bare sweep of steps and benches, the long curve of the archways and the hunched, advancing figures of two men bearing down on him. Guido and Lina had disappeared. Behind him was the back wall of the vaulting. He ran forward, throwing himself at the two men, and heard one of them laugh contemptuously. They held him, struggling and swaying, and an angry panic took him as he thought of Lina, his mind obsessed with the one thought that he must get to her, must find her. . . .

He struck out madly, and the struggle seemed to last an eternity. His desperation heightened time, movement and menace into a fantasy. Arms tightened around him, trying to still his blows, a foot smashed against his knee, drawing an angry sob of pain from him. Then he had an arm free, his fist driving towards the paleness of a face, an anonymous blur that suddenly dropped away from him as his arm tingled with the shock of his blow. He whipped around, striking again, felt his knuckles crashing into bone-hard flesh. He swung away, kicking madly at a shape that rose up from the ground and then, as the moonlight passed, he was plunging forward into the darkness, free of his attackers. Behind him as he ran, fending himself off from the stones and masonry that waited in the cavernous darkness, he heard the two men racing after him.

"Lina!" he shouted desperately, and his voice echoed between the crumbling cliffs of masonry.

Moonlight came back and he saw a great black gulf beneath him. He turned away, dropped down a tier and swung into the gloom of an arched tunnel. Somewhere ahead of him he saw the faint edge of a street light. Behind him now the sound of the following footsteps had ceased. He stood motionless, listening. The darkness returned and brought with it an oppressive silence. He leaned back against the stones, breathing hard, and then began cautiously to move down the archway towards the light.

"Ecco!"

He heard the shout behind him and the beat of feet ring against the arch. He ran on. The distant opening widened and he saw the great stretch of the piazza and, framed in it, the Arch of Constantine, a pale grey confection, remote and unreal, and then, at the edge of the piazza a car standing and two men hurrying towards it, holding between them a figure that struggled and twisted. He saw something white lift and swirl in the wind to the ground, and knew it was Lina's hat.

He came out of the Colosseum, through a narrow opening that debouched on to the wide pavement. As he did so, a man stepped forward from the side of the opening and tripped him. He fell headlong, his out-thrown hands taking the fall, the loose rubble and stones rasping at his skin. His body hit the ground with a force that drove all the wind from his body. He lay there sick and shaken, his breathing a slow, laboured succession of sobs. He rolled over, impelled still by the urgent desire to reach Lina and, as he tried to rise, he saw a face above him, saw a mouth gape with savage pleasure so that the teeth shone whitely, a face that hung over him, wolfish and pitiless. He raised a hand, but from the darkness of the sky above him something long and black swept down and he was hit over the head. Once . . . hearing the abrupt jerk of breath forced from his assailant by the effort, and then again. . . . This time the blackness of the sky and the night folded itself around him.

Manzo turned to the two men who had come out of the opening.

"Get him in the car quickly!"

It was raining, hard, slanting rain that slashed viciously against the windscreen of the car. The noise of the tyres made a voracious, angry sound against the wet road. Lina sat very still in the back of the car, her arm round Fletcher's shoulder, holding him against the sway and jolt of the machine. The morning light was cold and unfriendly over the wet hillsides and she watched the country unfold itself like a film without



EASE AND ELEGANCE—IN THE FRANCE OF LOUIS XV.

This beautiful French engraving was made in 1771 by Nicolas Ponce (1746-1831) from the gouache of Pierre Antoine Baudouin (1723-1769). It breathes the very

spirit of the late eighteenth century, that age of ease and elegance before the French Revolution brought the *Ancien Régime* to an end.

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THE SLEEPING MAN—Continued from page 20.]

interest, seeing it with her eyes, but her thoughts far from it. They were dropping down now into a valley, the hillside clothed with stiff pines and patches of leafless oak. Below the trees a series of terraces traced with the prim lines of vines marked the ground in neat ruling, and in the valley bottom, as the car took a curve, she saw the white edge of foam from a swollen torrent.

On the other side of her Guido lit himself a cigarette and settled more comfortably in his corner. The two men in front were silent, the driver's attention all on the wet road, the other occasionally fussing with his windscreen-wiper, which was working only spasmodically.

They went through a village and she saw a man in an old army ground-sheet standing outside the shabby *albergo*, saw a road plaque and read—"Bologna 180 Kms." They were not even bothering to hide from her where they were going.

The man beside the driver turned and gave her a smile.

"He's sleeping now, isn't he?"

She gave him no answer, her lips tight.

His smile became a little broader, but the movement of his shoulders suggested that he understood her feelings and did not mind.

"He'll be all right. But I agree with you, signorina. I do not like this kind of thing at all. Fundamentally it is not adult . . . but what is one to do?" He turned back and left her alone.

Fletcher was sleeping, but it was an uneasy sleep. Holding him was a comfort to Lina. It was something she could do, the only thing just now, but in it was all her gratitude to him and her regret for having brought this on him.

Guido said suddenly, "Signore Gambona, shall I be able to telephone Mara? There will be trouble at the club when I don't turn up to-night."

"The others will have told her."

"It is very inconvenient, Signore Gambona. We were making ten thousand a week there. Something must be done about that."

Signore Gambona stirred uncomfortably and then jerked over his shoulder: "This is no time to discuss business, Guido."

The driver of the car laughed dryly. "You're finished with Rome, Guido, for a while. It won't be safe for you—or any of us—unless Signore Gambona makes up his mind about those two."

"Shut up, Manzo. You drive. That is your job. The thinking belongs to me."

But if the responsibility belonged to Gambona, it was not a prerogative which he relished at that moment. Until these two had appeared on the scene, he had had the problem well in hand. The professor would be shipped off quietly. . . . He had no curiosity about his future, knowing well it would never be satisfied. In the Adriatic there would be a transfer to some timber-ship bound for the Black Sea. He would have then gone quietly back to Rome and collected his money. But now he had this young woman and the Englishman. He was not being paid for shipping them, his clients would not want them, and their disposal was his problem. Already he could see the expense and trouble involved unless . . . and here his mind rebelled against the violence implicit in the thoughts which would follow. He sighed gently, not wishing to accept the inevitable conclusion. It could wait for a while. . . . And, anyway, he was certain that Guido and Mara made nothing like ten thousand a week. A stirring in the back seat made him turn.

Fletcher was awake, lying still against the curve of Lina's arm. He looked at Gambona without speaking. Gambona gave him a little nod and said, with a faint paternal note in his voice:

"I am sorry, signore, to have had to treat you like this. It is quite impersonal . . ."

Fletcher raised a hand to the lump on his head. He was still a little hazed and his head was thumping viciously. He found himself replying pedantically, his voice unreal, himself oddly remote from this moment as great swathes of pain were drawn through his head. "Don't think there's anything impersonal about a blow on the head. . . . It's very personal. . . . It's—"

He swayed forward a little and Lina caught him and eased him backwards against the cushions of the car. Guido leaned across her and held out a flask.

Lina accepted it and held it to Fletcher's lips. The brandy drew him together. Some time later Gambona spoke to him again, and this time he was awake, aware of himself clearly and the others.

"Just sit there and don't give any trouble. Heroics"—there was a touch of disdain as Gambona said the word—"won't do you any good and will only compel me to unpleasantness, signore. I should regret that."

Fletcher stirred angrily. "You're going to regret a lot of things. What do you think you're going to do with us?"

Gambona passed a hand gently over his waved hair and turned away. It was a question he wanted to avoid for a while.

"John"—Lina put her hand in his and he held it firmly, finding a smile for her, as she went on—"I'm sorry about all this. If only—"

"Don't worry . . ." He squeezed her hand, knowing that from him she wanted comfort and strength.

The rain stayed with them, veiling the countryside in long, sweeping grey shrouds as they drove north. Whenever they went through a town or a large village both Guido and Gambona became alert, turning towards them, watching them, but they gave no trouble. Once they were held up for an hour by a lorry that had skidded across a bridge, blocking the road. Manzo drove the car back from the bridge and they waited while some *contadini* and the lorry crew hauled the vehicle off the road. During this time Gambona produced a flask of wine, a length of salami and some brown bread. They ate, silently, and Fletcher found himself hungry.

They came down off the Apennines, avoiding Bologna, as the evening was closing about them. On the plain the fields were flooded. In some

places the road was a dark ribbon stretching across the swamped orchards and farmlands. They stopped at a bridge, under which a flooded river roared angrily, while Manzo filled up the petrol tank from an old army 4-gallon container he took from the boot of the car. For a while the two were left alone in the car and Fletcher asked Lina:

"Do you know where we are?"

"Yes—we're going in the direction of Ferrara."

When they started again, Manzo switched on the headlights and the countryside was lost to them. They drove through an unchanging curtain of rain.

Two hours later the car was bumping and swaying across a rough country road. The headlights picked out a long run of wall broken by a roofed gateway, and they moved through into a wide, cobbled yard, flanked by farm buildings. Before them was the tall façade of a three-storied farmhouse.

They were taken out of the car and into the house. In the long, low kitchen a man in corduroy trousers and a red waistcoat embroidered with flowers rose from the rough table, on which stood an oil-lamp. He was very old, his face cut and seamed with years and his hands were gnarled and twisted like olive limbs. A woman, not so old, stood over the stove at the far end of the kitchen, stirring a saucepan. She gave them one look, her face grim and disapproving, and turned back to her cooking.

"Where is he, Meo?" Gambona asked the old man.

"Upstairs." Momentarily Meo seemed to hesitate on the verge of some protest, then, with a slow, resigned movement, he pulled a key from the pocket of his waistcoat and handed it to Gambona. Gambona nodded to the door at the end of the kitchen and Fletcher and Lina were shepherded towards it by Manzo and Guido.

"And Bastini?"

"He went this morning with his friend."

"The sooner you all go, the better! *Dio mio*—that I should have such a son!" It was the woman who spoke, sharp and bitter, and without turning from her fire.

"Mamma—" Meo made a weary gesture of protest.

Gambona laughed and before the old man could say more, cut in: "The same old Mamma. She would rather I was here, eating *polenta*, scratching the earth with my nails." He held out his hand for a moment and looked at the well-kept nails. "I eat four meals a day, Mamma—when did I ever do that in the old times here?"

The old woman made no answer.

Fletcher and Lina were led up the stairs, lit by a lamp the old man carried before them. There was a dark, close smell about the house of mice and corn and clothes and stagnant air.

Fletcher heard Gambona's heavy tread on the worn stairs behind them, and then his voice, saying disdainfully: "This house smells of poverty. Once you've known it, it takes years to get it out of your nostrils." He laughed as he heard Meo mutter to himself angrily.

On the top floor they were taken along a corridor. A gleam of light showed from under a heavy doorway at the end.

Gambona unlocked it and stood aside for them to enter. They went in. The door closed behind them and they heard the key turn and a bolt being pushed over.

It was a long room, with one barred window at the far end. Against one wall were two small beds. In the centre of the room was a terracotta stove with a pipe that went straight up into the ceiling, and close to it a low table with a lamp on it. Along one wall was stacked a great pile of empty wine-bottles and flasks, thick with dust and cobwebs. Near the door the floor was spread with straw which covered the season's crop of apples, and the whole room was redolent with their sweet, faintly pungent aroma.

Seated at the table was Dr. Longman, reading. He stood up, eyed them silently for a moment, and then, with a smile, came to them and put his arm around Lina's shoulders and rubbed the back of his hand gently against her cheek. Then, looking over her head at Fletcher, he said cheerfully:

"When I was a boy I used to be locked out of the apple room. Being locked in one is a new experience."

Lina suddenly made a convulsive movement, burying her face in his shoulder. "Peppino—it's awful—awful. It's all my fault—"

"Lina." Peppino held her comfortingly. "Lina, *cara*—Don't worry."

It was a long time before they settled down for the night. Lina had a bed to herself, while Peppino and Fletcher stretched out on the other, head to toe. None of them undressed, for it was cold in the room and they had few blankets.

Fletcher lay there in the darkness, his thoughts and his discomfort keeping him awake. During the war he had known danger and hardship, but they had been legitimate, something he had shared with thousands of others, so that their universality made them acceptable. This was something quite new.

Fletcher had found Peppino wise, friendly, but possessed of an incurable levity which he suspected was a counter to the immense responsibility his profession had brought to him. No attempt had been made to hide anything from him by Bastini and another man who had driven him up. He was to be shipped from Chioggia. Whether he knew anything of importance, whether he possessed research results on paper or only in his head was of no importance to them. "Over there" they would either find ways of making him talk, persuading him to work—or he would be eliminated. Any of these results was valuable, either positively or negatively. He had sat munching an apple, explaining

[Continued on page 31.]

WHEN OUR GREAT-GRANDPARENTS WERE YOUNG.



"EASTWARD HO!"—SOLDIERS BOARDING A TROOPSHIP BOUND FOR THE CRIMEAN WAR, BY HENRY NELSON O'NEIL, A.R.A.

A hundred years ago or so, when soldiers sailed away on foreign service in the old wooden ships, there was a poignancy and threat of finality in their farewells to wives and sweethearts which this generation does not have to endure in the same way; for distance has been reduced, if not annihilated, by the speed of modern air transport.

This painting of troops bidding good-bye to their families before embarking for the Crimea was one of Henry Nelson O'Neil's most popular pictures, and was exhibited in the R.A. in 1858. It is signed "Henry O'Neil" and dated 1858. The artist, who exhibited in the Royal Academy, 1838-79, died in 1880. The Crimean War ended in 1856.

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WHEN OUR GREAT-GRANDPARENTS WERE VERY YOUNG.



"THE YOUNG ANGLER", BY HENRY WALTON (1746-1813).

A taste for angling—the preferred sport of the contemplative, nature-loving man—is born in the individual, for it is seldom acquired in later life. It is clear that the little boy who sat to Henry Walton, the Norfolk-born painter who studied under Zoffany, and

exhibited in the Royal Academy from 1777-1779, was a natural follower of the immortal Izaak Walton, though the catch of coarse fish with which he is posed is not an impressive one. He may well be dreaming of the "one that got away."

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WHEN OUR GREAT-GRANDPARENTS WERE VERY YOUNG.



"PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG GIRL", BY JOHN HOPPNER, R.A. (1758-1810).

Fashions in hats and hairdressing vary through the ages, but such changes of setting cannot alter the beauty of a girl when the "youthful hue sits on her face like morning dew," or detract from, or enhance the charm of wide-set hazel eyes and golden curls.

John Hoppner, who painted this typically lovely English girl, was appointed Portrait Painter to the Prince of Wales in 1789, and exhibited in the Royal Academy from 1780-1809. His work was greatly influenced by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.

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WHEN OUR GREAT-GRANDPARENTS WERE YOUNG: "MANY HAPPY RETURNS OF THE DAY", BY WILLIAM POWELL FRITH, R.A.

This joyous gathering, the very essence of Victorian prosperity and family solidarity, was painted by William Powell Frith, R.A., in 1856 and exhibited in the Royal Academy that year. Special interest is added by the fact that the little girl in whose honour the party is being held was the artist's daughter, Alice; and he has faithfully depicted every detail of what was a typical domestic scene in early Victorian England. Presents and letters are being brought in by a neat parlourmaid, and the table is laden with cakes, fruit and sweets. Glasses of Madeira are about to be decorously sipped by the elders after the bouquet has been enjoyed, while an enthusiastic young tippler—sampling his first glass of wine, no doubt—is tossing it off with indiscriminating gusto. The spectacled grandfather has turned from *The Times* to view the scene devotedly, and the pride which the blond bewhiskered paterfamilias feels for his seven "little olive branches" is obvious.

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WHEN OUR GREAT-GRANDPARENTS WERE YOUNG.



"THE PROPOSAL", BY W. P. FRITH, R.A.

To look at a painting by William Powell Frith is to call back yesterday and to view Victorian life with the eyes of our great-grandparents, for this artist recorded the everyday scenes of his period with remarkable detail and verisimilitude. This enchantingly romantic scene, a very shy girl listening to words of love from a handsome and

poetic-looking youth, is signed and dated 1877. It is possible, however, that the title may be a later invention and that the painting might be "The Lovers' Seat," exhibited at the R.A. in 1876 and which the artist described as "a small picture"; if this be so, the date must have been added later.

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WHEN OUR GREAT-GRANDPARENTS WERE YOUNG.



"THE PROPOSAL", BY W. P. FRITH, R.A.

Victorian thought and manners are remote indeed from those of to-day, but lovers have felt the same hopes and fears in every generation. Though great-grandmother is nervously plucking at her bouquet, as when seated on a "sociable" in the back drawing-room she listens to the impassioned pleading of her dark-haired

suitor—who has all the air of a fortune-hunter—she obviously has the situation in hand, and is going to say a firm, but ladylike "No." The costume and style of the painting indicate that it dates from the middle 1850's, and it is possible that it may be the work exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1855 as "The Lovers."

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WHEN OUR GREAT-GRANDPARENTS WERE YOUNG.



"DOLLY VARDEN, LOOKING BACK AT HER LOVER"; BY W. P. FRITH, R.A.
Signed and dated 1843. [By permission of the Baroness Burton.]



"BEDTIME," ALSO CALLED "PRAYER"; BY W. P. FRITH, R.A. THE PAINTER'S
WIFE AND ONE OF HIS CHILDREN. [By permission of Sir Godfrey Thomas, Bt., G.C.V.O.]



"ENGLISH ARCHERS" ("THE FAIR TOXOPHILITES"); BY W. P. FRITH, R.A.
THE ARTIST'S DAUGHTERS, ALICE, FANNY ("BUNCH") AND LOUISE (L. TO R.).
Signed and dated 1872. [By permission of Mrs. Edgar Sheppard.]



"DOLLY VARDEN" ("THE LAUGHING DOLLY"), HEROINE OF "BARNABY RUDGE";
BY W. P. FRITH, R.A. [By permission of Mr. P. R. Bedford.]

William Powell Frith, R.A. (1819-1909), faithfully recorded his contemporary scene, and his works present many aspects of Victorian life which to modern eyes are full of charm, and are of sentimental and documentary interest. He was also very attracted by one of Charles Dickens's most popular characters, "Dolly Varden" of "Barnaby Rudge," and painted this dainty heroine several times. In November, 1842, he received a commission from Dickens himself for a version which we illustrate on this page. The painting shows Dolly looking back at her lover. Her costume is exactly as described by Dickens in the novel. "... the very pink and pattern of good looks in a smart

little cherry-coloured mantle, with a hood of the same drawn over her head, and upon the top of that hood, a little straw hat trimmed with cherry-coloured ribbons, and worn the merest trifle on one side—just enough, in short, to make it the wickedest and most provoking head-dress that ever malicious milliner devised." Frith frequently painted members of his family. "The Fair Toxophilites" were three of his daughters; and it is interesting to recall that this attractive picture is in the possession of his granddaughter, Mrs. Edgar Sheppard, daughter of Alice, while Sir Godfrey Thomas, who owns "Bedtime," is Frith's great-grandson.

THE SLEEPING MAN—Continued from page 22.]

it to them and breaking off humorously to comment that Meo ought to spray his trees against apple-pit.

It was clear to Fletcher that Peppino saw no merit in being depressed by their situation. But he, Fletcher, wanted more. His pride and body, resenting the abuses suffered by them, demanded action. He fell asleep wondering what he could do.

The morning gave him little chance for any action. Meo brought them coffee and slabs of bread spread with a cherry *marmellata*. All three ate hungrily, wishing for more. Fletcher stood by the closely-barred window and looked out over the countryside. There was little he could see, and that depressing. The farmhouse stood on a small rise, the long wall running completely around it. At the back of the house, across a flooded field, he could see the embankment of a river that was running high. As far as he could see the land was flooded, the brown water lapping about the boles of the fruit- and olive-trees.

Peppino came and stood by him.

"The river," he said, "is a small tributary of the Po. I talked to Meo yesterday. This place is not far from Rovigo. The nearest big village is Aisella about three miles down the river. I've passed through it once or twice when I've been motoring."

Lina came and joined them and, without thought, Fletcher slipped his arm through hers. After a silence she said: "What are we going to do? None of us seems to want to talk about that, but we're all thinking about it. We must do something!"

Peppino turned away from the window, a humorous glint in his eyes. "My only authority for a situation like this is John Buchan. Maybe you younger people have some new authority. The least Buchan would have suggested would be that someone stood beside the door and hit Gambona on the head as he came in."

"The door opens the wrong way," Fletcher pointed out. "Besides, it would probably be Meo . . . poor old boy."

As he spoke there were the sounds of a key in the door and the bolt being drawn. Gambona came in. He was freshly shaved, his big face shining, and he looked cheerful. With him was Manzo, and they both wore raincoats.

They stood silently watching the three, and slowly, with a deadly clarity and awful conviction of helplessness, they knew that the moment had come. Peppino was going to be taken away.

Lina put her arm through Peppino's, holding him. She would never see him again . . . never. Peppino touched her hand. She turned furiously towards Gambona.

"No—you can't do it! You can't take him!"

"Signorina . . . please," Gambona said quietly. Then he nodded to Peppino. "Doctor Longman . . . please to come with us. You two will stay here. When we come back we will decide about you."

There was a ruthless urbanity in Gambona's manner, a vigorous quality of assurance that suddenly enraged Fletcher. He picked up one of the wine-bottles and stood in front of Peppino.

"If you want him—you'll have to get him!"

Gambona shook his head slowly and pulled a revolver from his pocket. "Don't make me act hastily, signore."

Peppino reached out and took the bottle from Fletcher.

"Thank you, John. I know how you feel—but it would do no good."

Peppino picked up his book and accepted a ground-sheet from Gambona. For a moment, as he paused at the door, looking at Lina, Fletcher felt anger rise again in him and would have gone forward, but Lina's hand held his arm.

"It won't help. Peppino . . . good-bye . . ." Her voice faded.

"Good-bye, Lina. God bless you both." He was gone.

As the door closed on them, Lina turned towards the window. Fletcher, watching her, saw her shoulders shaking gently and for a while he left her alone. He sat down on his bed, staring moodily at the dusty pile of empty wine-bottles. Peppino had gone, and they had been helpless, and soon now they, too, would be taken.

He heard Lina move away from the window. She stood before him and he saw her face, the sadness in it touching him, the courage behind the passing smile she gave him rousing all his tenderness and anxiety for her. He reached out a hand and she sat beside him. Then with a sudden, abrupt movement her head was on his shoulder and he was holding her, stroking her hair, comforting her as her body shook with the release of her tears.

They sat there for a long time; alone in the musty, disordered room, with its pungent apple smell. The call of Meo's cattle, the clap of pigeons' wings from the birds in the courtyard came distantly to them. But now they were isolated, in this tiny room, removed from the life outside, two negligible ciphers whose cancellation remained only a matter of time. Their unimportance to others drew them close to one another. He began to talk to her, hardly aware of what he said, but knowing there was comfort and strength for them both in his words, in the triviality of talking. Time now was their enemy and its power seemed less compelling when robbed of silence. Yet after a while silence came back.

He kissed her gently and they sat, his arm about her waist, holding her hand, caressing it, seeing the faint, blue lines of veins, dusky beneath the skin.

They were still sitting there when, much later, there came the sound of feet outside the room.

The door opened and then slammed viciously. They stood up. Peppino was standing alone before them, a wry smile on his puckered face.

"Peppino!" Lina ran to him and he caught her in his arms.

"Lina—" He patted her arm and smiled at Fletcher over her

shoulder. "Gambona's in a very bad temper. I remember my father slamming a door like that once. It came right off the hinges."

"Why are you back, though?" asked Fletcher.

"They couldn't get out. The road is flooded and washed away in one place."

He took off his ground-sheet and dropped it on a chair and then told them what had happened.

The road from the farm had run across the fields a foot above the surrounding flood-water, a narrow line of embankment bordered with poplars and an occasional mulberry-tree. Two miles from the farm the ribbon of road was broken for about twenty yards where the pressure of flood-water had swept it away during the night. A fulvid, froth-flecked torrent poured through the gap. For half an hour Gambona and Manzo had tried to find a way out on to the main road and had failed. Either the other roads were under water or were gapped, or small wooden bridges had been swept away. The farther from the farm they had gone, the more powerful and deeper seemed the floods. In the end, Gambona had brought him back to the farm.

During the afternoon the rain, which had been falling continuously, stopped. Under the escort of Gambona, Manzo and Guido the three were let out into the courtyard to walk on a raised terrace that buttressed the farm wall on the side nearest the river. Guido sat and smoked at one end of the terrace, while Gambona and Manzo guarded the other end. In the yard, Meo was busy about the outhouses, and once his wife, Flavia, came out and fed the few miserable-looking hens that loitered about the house.

Gambona was worried. Early that morning he had had a call from Arma and Bastini at Chioggia that everything was arranged. But now the flooded road had made him a prisoner too. He had telephoned Arma on his return to the farm, saying that he must wait for the floods to drop. He looked up now at the swollen grey sky and then across the brown stretch of water to the river, which rolled and swirled fiercely between its embankments.

Guido came up to Fletcher. His padded suit was crumpled and he looked now like a bedraggled bird. He rubbed his hands nervously, his smile timid, and said, "Don't be too angry with me, signore. That it was to be so serious I did not know. Underneath here"—he touched his heart—"I am a good man, but always something makes it so difficult. A man has so many worries . . . money, my Mara—"

"Go away, Guido—I'm tired of your act." Guido retired crestfallen.

Fletcher went back to the others. After a while he said to Peppino thoughtfully, "Could we swim that gap in the flooded road?"

"You could and Lina could. I can't swim."

"We'd get you across somehow."

"What are you thinking, John?" asked Lina.

Fletcher nodded towards the house.

"I've been looking at the window in our room. I think with a little persuasion the whole wooden framework that carries the bars would come out. It's like the rest of this house—rotten and ready to fall to pieces. We could rip it out to-night and get away."

Peppino turned and stared up at the house. "There's too much of a drop to the ground." His eye travelled the length of the pink stucco front and the small parapet that ran around the roof-edge. "But an agile man could stand on a window-sill and reach that parapet. He could haul himself up and then help others up. When you can't go down, go up—"

"That's what I was thinking. Once on the roof, there may be a way down. It's worth trying. As soon as it's dark I'll go up and have a look round."

Gambona came down to them.

"Time to go back." He paused for a moment and then, with a friendly smile, went on. "I would like to say to you how much I appreciate your attitude towards this unfortunate situation. Human dignity is the last thing one should relinquish. Myself, this is business and I like to do business with sensible people. *Maledetto*, you are for me just so much merchandise and business overheads."

"The Doctor may be merchandise, but as one of the overheads, I would like to know what you propose to do with Signorina Carapacci and myself when the doctor has gone?" inquired Fletcher.

Gambona held out his hands and his lips pouted for a moment.

"Signore—you make some suggestion—other than the obvious one—which would satisfy us all and I shall be delighted. I cannot let you go. I cannot keep you here for ever. *Allora*—what shall I do?"

It was said calmly, but there was no doubt what was in his mind, and instinctively Fletcher put his arm around Lina.

It was at this moment that Manzo, at the far end of the terrace, gave a cry and came running towards them. "The river! The river!" he shouted.

But already his voice was drowned by the noise of the waters. It was an ill-tempered, powerful sound, the grinding, munching growl of a great monster. Two hundred yards away and just above the farm Fletcher saw a thin line of bushes that marked the embankment top slowly tilt and tremble and then a great slice of the river wall was slowly, ponderously, lifted and, backed by a spouting, brown-plumed outrush of torrent, it slid rapidly down to the flooded field below and in a second was lost in a tumbling spate of cascading water. With a tearing, exultant cry the river shouldered its way through the gap like an uncontrolled crowd, ripping away at the bank, widening and battering it. A poplar on the slope of the embankment shook gently as though a soft breeze had taken it. Then, as the torrent sucked around it and the earth was drawn away from its roots, it toppled majestically and a moment later was lost in the turbulent current. The flood-water of the surrounding

fields, placid until now, slowly shook off its lethargy. Long black streaks of waking currents, thick with mud and debris, began to mark its surface. For a while, as the group on the terrace stared, fascinated, the floods wavered, swung current against current, and spouted in conflicting whirlpools so that jets of bright water darted skywards. Then, with a lumbering menace, the waters slowly resolved their warring powers and began to move in a broad, debris-stained stream past the farm. It swept by, the first head of unrestrained river-water, in a rising bore, fifty yards from the wall, washing down the long length of the narrow eminence on which the farm stood, lapping rapidly upwards towards a willow and poplar copse that formed the prow of the high land.

They watched the river embankment rot and crumble for a hundred yards, heard the roar of the sliding river, now a long, smooth slope of mottled glass, as it plunged across the fields and orchards and rapidly rose to make an island of the farm and its immediate lands. A voice, trembling, but with a stoic, aged strength came from behind them.

"Here we shall be safe. Not even in the great flood of the last century was Il Praterello swamped. . . . But this night there will be sorrow in all the Po Valley for, if the bank has gone here, it will be gone in other places."

They turned, to find Meo standing behind them.

By the evening, river and flood-land had become one, a great sheet of fast-racing water that stretched as far as the eye could see on either side of them, an angry spate of flood laden now with uprooted trees, pieces of buildings, sometimes a whole hut or farm outhouse and, here and there, the pathetic bulk of drowned cattle and farm animals. Once a duck-punt with two men aboard went racing by, the men shouting and calling in distress. And as the light went, the rain began again and drove them into the house.

They all sat in the kitchen. Twelve feet of racing flood-water, treacherous with twisting, surface-scarring currents, hidden drift- and snag-wood, made any escape by swimming suicidal. Prisoners and prison-keepers were all reduced to a common plight and for a time there was an unvoiced neutrality between them.

Meo's wife, Flavia, cooked for them a frugal meal of *pasta asciutta*.

"We have enough food," she said, "but who can tell how long we may have to make it last?"

Guido and Manzo sat in a corner of the kitchen, playing cards. On a shelf above them was the radio, which they had just switched off. The news on the radio had proved Meo's words true. The high rains of the last month and the mild weather thawing the snow in the Alps and Apennines had swollen the Po and the Adige and this, combined with strong southerly winds backing the waters of the Adriatic up into the Po delta so that the river waters were held up, had broken the banks and precipitated what promised to be one of the largest floods of modern times. In some places the rivers had risen thirty feet and towns and villages were cut off. Already rescue operations were under way. The whole area south of Rovigo and Adria was under water, and Il Praterello was in the centre of that area.

Fletcher sat with Lina near the stove. For want of something better to do they were looking at some old magazines, talking softly to one another at times. Peppino was reading his book, and Gambona was sitting at the table, with his head on his hands, thinking. Meo sat across the fireplace, a rake stock between his knees, shaping the butt with a sharp knife to fit a new rake-head. They were a depressed company, and Fletcher had the impression that hope had abandoned both parties for the time being and trembled above them, hesitating to choose which side to take. Meo looked up and caught Fletcher's eye.

"The river to-night will be full of death. Men, women and children, cattle . . . all that the floods will have taken. I have seen it before when I was a boy . . . homes and families swept away. It is a wrath of God which no man can explain. . . ." It was as though he spoke to himself, for no one answered. Fletcher suddenly caught sight of Manzo's face. He was watching him and Lina as Guido, a faded, crumpled figure in his smart vaudeville suit, dealt the cards. The dog-like grimace was turned towards them. He had not shaven, his hair was a rough thicket, through which he occasionally ran his fingers. His voice, harsh, but with a persuasive, evil quality, broke the silence.

"Signore Gambona. . . ."

Gambona looked up.

"Signore Gambona. I do not know what you think, but to me it is clear. The floods are for us. They may last three, six days, but we are safe here. The telephone still works . . . but for how long? Get on to Arma and have him bring a launch up the river from Chioggia. He can take us off. . . . Yes, the floods solve everything. The old man is right, there will be death in the water." He nodded sharply towards Fletcher and Lina. "Do you not understand? What will two bodies more mean amongst so many? It could be done now, this night."

He gave a little dry laugh and then picked up his cards and began to sort them. Fletcher put out his hand and took Lina's. He wanted his touch to reassure her, give her strength, but there was fear in his own heart, pounding, vivid fear for the first time, because he could see Gambona's face as the man rose and, without a word, went to the door and opened it. A skirl of wind drove rain over the threshold and the noise of the lusty, brawling flood-waters beat into the room like the frenzied blood call of an angry crowd. Peppino turned and watched Gambona.

"You don't have to do that, Signore Gambona. Once you've got me away you can let them go."

Gambona stirred, one hand lifting, as though the brutality of the rain and floods angered him. "And what happens to me and the others? They know too much."

"If I asked them—they might give their word—"

Gambona turned, the door slamming behind him. "Trust them! I don't trust anyone! No, Manzo is right. . . ." He raised his hand

to his face, rubbing his chin. It was a drawn, sad face, the face of a man caught in his own evil. He looked at the three of them and was about to speak, when Flavia, who had been knitting in the gloom at the side of her kitchen dresser, stood up and went to him. She stopped a foot from him, and her lined, vigorous face was hard and menacing.

"*Filio mio*"—but there was no tenderness, no love, as she named him her son—"do this thing, here in this house which saw your birth, which saw the unhappiness of your growth to a man, and you do an evil which God will never forgive you. I know nothing of these people, nothing of your affairs, and wish not to know—but if you harm them here then I will be silent no longer. What you do in violence away from Il Praterello is beyond my conscience, but here there will be no violence. To be safe you will have to silence me and your father." Flavia's voice suddenly lost its strength and she faltered, one hand going to her eyes wearily. "*Dio mio* . . . that I should have such a son. . . . What was the sin that brought this on us?" She turned towards Meo and he rose and put his arm around her.

"Your mother speaks also for me."

From behind them Manzo said impatiently, "Don't listen to the old fools—chuck 'em in the river as well."

Gambona moved swiftly. His hand came up and struck Manzo across the face, his eyes blazing.

"They are mine! No one speaks so of them!"

Manzo, tense, half-rose and then relaxed and gave a slow shrug of his shoulders. "*Va bene* . . . now think for yourself."

Gambona went out of the room into the small parlour beyond the kitchen, and a few moments later they heard him using the telephone.

That night they were locked in. They slept like logs, all thought of escape gone from them. The next morning no attempt was made to keep them to the farm. The floods had now risen so that the river side of the enclosing farm wall was lapped by four feet of water and part of the courtyard was submerged. But on the far side of the farm there was a long strip of high ground that stretched for a couple of hundred yards west of the house. On the tip, facing up like the prow of a canoe against the swirling current, was a group of willows and poplars rising from a thick undergrowth of bushes and briars. Over the island, miserable and restless, moved Meo's cattle and pigs and a few other cows and some goats which, swept down by the flood, had saved themselves by struggling ashore.

The three of them sat at the edge of the wood watching the flood. Meo came up to them, an empty pail in his hand. He had been feeding his pigs. As they turned to him, he said gruffly, "This morning, before you were awake, a police boat came to the island to see if we were safe. My son sent them away. He locked his mother and me in the kitchen. We could not speak for you. Now he has spoken to some friend in Chioggia and a launch comes to take you away—"

"When?" put in Fletcher quickly.

"That is not certain. All the boats have been commandeered for rescue work, but when they get a launch it will come up the river for you. . . . To-morrow, the day after . . . maybe longer. My son's friend could not say. But it will come."

There was a stir in the bushes behind them and Manzo pushed his way towards them.

"Gambona says you are not to talk to them, old one. And you—" he scowled unpleasantly at the three, "—are free to move about, but you must keep in sight of the house."

They walked slowly back to the farm-house. Peppino went up to their room to fetch his book, a copy of Manzoni's "*The Betrothed*," which he had found.

"Maybe," he smiled, as he left them, "the launch will be delayed so long I shall be able to finish it."

Fletcher and Lina sat talking. There was a close bond between them now, a promise rising for them which made them restless and impatient.

"We've got to get off here. Somehow . . . and before the launch comes," insisted Fletcher.

But how? That question stayed with them all day.

Just before the last of the afternoon had gone, Fletcher and Lina strolled hand-in-hand towards the copse at the end of the island. Guido, who seemed now to have been appointed their shadow, was about twenty yards behind them. When they paused at the edge of the trees, he came up to them and, smiling ingratiatingly, said, "Signore, you will excuse me. I have been told to stay with you. . . . However, when one is in love it is bad to have a third person around." He gave Lina an apologetic smile. "My Mara, too, was beautiful like you once. If you wish to be alone . . . I shall not follow."

They went through the trees and stood on the little bush-covered promontory that jutted out into the flood-waters. Fletcher put his hands on her arms, holding her away from him. Her dark hair was damp with the rain, the green suit muddy and crumpled, and her eyes shadowed with fatigue and stress. . . . But she was Lina, someone now close and precious to him. She came to him, raising her face, and he put his lips on hers, feeling the warmth and softness like a benison. They stood like that, holding each other, not speaking, the caresses between them more poignant than any words, their closeness shutting away all danger for a while.

A crash in the bushes behind Fletcher made him swing round. With the full force of the flood behind it, a large, flat, waterlogged section of wooden roofing from some chicken-house or garage had come sweeping down the current and had been driven partly ashore. Fletcher stood there, holding Lina's hand. Then, suddenly, he jumped forward, reaching out for the nearest edge of the roof which was beginning to wheel under the pressure of the stream and was about to be borne off by the current.

"Quick—help me!"

Lina grasped the roofing as well and between them they hauled it a little way up into the bushes.

Seeing his expression, she realised what he was thinking. "But, John. . . . We could never get away like that."

Fletcher took her arm and drew her back into the trees. "Maybe not. It would be under water with our weight, but there are ways of getting over that. . . ." He was silent, thinking.

"If we are going to use it, we'd better not stay here. Guido might come along and see it," said Lina. "Do you think it will stay like that?"

"Not if the water rises any more. We must get it up higher."

He was moving towards the roof, when Lina stopped him. Behind them, through the trees, came the sound of voices. They turned at once, leaving the roof, and were only a few yards from it when Gambona appeared with Guido.

Gambona smiled at them. Now that the launch was coming he was in good spirits. The problem of these two he had pushed from him for a while.

"Time to go back," he said. "Mamma has a good supper for us to-night. Chicken. . . ." He turned, following them as they went out

side of the window and drew himself up. A few moments later he was reaching down and helping Lina up.

They stood together on the narrow run of leads behind the parapet. It was drizzling slightly and there was a thin, cold wind with the rain.

"This way." He began to move along the roof, Lina holding his hand as she followed. At the far end of the house they found a small gable, the window of which Fletcher forced with his penknife. They climbed in and found themselves at the head of a narrow run of stairs leading down to a corridor, from the far end of which came a faint light.

They moved along the corridor away from the light. Very faintly to their ears came the sound of people talking on the ground-floor. Fletcher pushed open a rough door at the end of the corridor. Moving into the darkness, his feet struck something soft. He flicked on his cigarette-lighter and saw that they were in a large loft, most of its space piled with corn-sacks. In the far wall was a narrow half-door. Fletcher pulled the bolt and opened the top half of the door. He found himself looking out over the far side of the courtyard. Immediately below him was a narrow flight of steps leading to the ground, by which the sacks were brought up to the store.

"We're in luck," he whispered to Lina.

In a few moments they were hurrying across the wet grass towards



And now the current took them and swept them out into the main river. It held them, denying all their efforts to reach the security of the quieter waters, racing them along, washing over them as the raft tipped and lurched. Behind them the launch broke free from the bank and came speeding after them.

of the trees. "When I was a boy here, chicken, or meat, only came once, twice, a year. . . ."

Later when they were locked up in their room, Fletcher told Peppino about the raft. "If only I can get out and the roof is still there I can haul it up and hide it by piling bushes and grasses on top of it—"

"You'll never do that by yourself. I shall come," said Lina.

"Will it hold the three of us?" Peppino asked.

"Not now. But if we can find four oil-drums or something to buoy the corners it would ride much higher in the water and we could use it. We haven't far to go. Aisella, that's three miles away. We could make it."

He picked up the poker which stood alongside the stove and went to the window. He inserted the poker between the wooden framework and the masonry and found that the long, wooden studs that keyed it at each corner to the bricks moved easily. In a few moments he had the framework, complete with its bars, resting below the window.

"It's dark enough to risk it now. I'll go first and then help you up, Lina. Peppino—you must make up our beds with straw and hope that no one comes."

Peppino nodded, and said, "It's a true saying that God never shuts a door without opening a window."

Fletcher hauled himself out on to the window-ledge and then stood up cautiously. Reaching up, he found that his fingers just grasped the edge of the roof-parapet. He took a hold, braced a foot against the

the wood, the same thought in each of their minds: if only the flood-water had not risen and drawn the roof away from its flimsy anchorage. They came running through the last of the bushes and, for a moment, Fletcher thought the raft had gone. Then he saw that the water had risen about three inches and the whole of the roof-length was below the surface, wedged at the landward end under a tree-root which held it fast.

Fletcher stripped to his pants and waded in to take the far end of the roof and pull it backwards from the entrapping root, while Lina pushed and struggled with it from the shore. Shivering and muddy, he suddenly felt it come free and swing out towards the racing current. For a few seconds he hung on desperately to it, his nails digging into the soft wood. Then Lina came wading into the water and helped him. Laboriously they drew it in and dragged it, inch by inch, ashore. With his knife he cut branches and swaths of dry reed and covered the platform so that anyone passing casually by day would not notice it.

As they left the copse, the rain increased. The wind rose and they had to fight their way against it, the rain slashing into their faces.

Back in their room, they dropped on their beds exhausted. Peppino replaced the framework and then made up the stove, for which they had collected wood during the day, and hung their wet clothes to dry before it.

"All we want now," said Lina, staring at the flickering shadows on the ceiling, "is four drums, some rope and lengths of wood long enough to use as paddles."

"That shouldn't be difficult," said Peppino. Then, with an impish smile, he went on: "The last time I was on a raft, it fell to pieces under me. I was ten at the time."

The next day, as though the weather, too, would celebrate the return of hope, the sky was clear and the sun unexpectedly warm. The three were up early, searching for their materials. It would have caused too much comment if they had all separated, so Lina worked with Peppino and Fletcher by himself.

It was largely a question of strolling casually about the farm buildings and land, and Fletcher found it hard to control his impatience. Guido kept with him, while Gambona and Manzo stayed with Lina and Peppino.

For a long time Fletcher had no luck. Then, making towards the stable, he leaned against the doorway and lit himself a cigarette. Guido came up and talked. Guido seemed quite genuinely contrite and made every effort he could to be friendly. As they talked, Fletcher's eyes were going round the stables and it was with a swift lift of excitement that he saw against the far wall two oil-drums. Hanging above them, too, was a long length of rope. The drums could stay there until the night, but the sight of the rope made him think of Peppino. The climb on to the roof was hard. The rope would enable them to lower Peppino to the ground and then, when they were at the raft, could be used for lashings. Suddenly he was anxious to have the rope now. Luck was with him. One of Meo's cows, hungry from the lack of feed on the overcrowded patch of pasture left, came wandering into the yard and Meo called to Guido to help him drive her out. The moment Guido had gone Fletcher whipped into the stable and quickly wound the rope about himself under his jacket. He walked across the yard and up to their room, where he hid the rope under his mattress.

When he came down, it was to find Lina and Peppino standing on the terrace, watching the floods. He went over and joined them. There had been no abatement of the great rush and press of water. As far as the eye could see there was a shimmering lake of turbulent flood, gay and sparkling under the sun, shouldering its relentless way seawards, making sport of the flotsam and jetsam of the richest valley in Italy. A dead ox, its body swollen by putrefaction, floated by on the stream, its legs signalling stiffly as its great bulk dipped and gyrated. A sodden mattress, with a hen crouched on it, followed. The flood was gorged with the pathetic debris of human and animal life . . . rich with sorrow-marked booty . . . chairs, tables, boxes and pieces of barns and sheds.

Speaking very quietly, for Gambona and Manzo were not far away, he told them of his discovery.

"There's another drum in the scullery behind the kitchen," said Lina. "I went in there with Flavia. At night we could get it out. I slipped the catch on the window."

"That makes three," said Peppino. "We need four to keep the raft stable and high enough out of the water."

"We'll find it, don't worry. What about paddles?"

Peppino smiled. "I've been collecting firewood for the stove. There's enough wood in our room to build a boat. . . . If we had time we might even do that."

They had their lunch in the kitchen with Gambona and his companions and, as they were eating, the telephone-bell rang. By some miracle the line was still intact, the heads of the telegraph-poles stretching away alongside the flooded farm road, not more than two feet above water.

They heard Gambona answering the telephone and after a while he came back into the room. He was smiling, looking happier than he had done for a long time.

He looked across at Manzo and said briefly: "Arma. The launch will be here to-morrow some time."

Fletcher saw Lina's face, the dark eyes turning to him, and he knew what was in her mind. He put his hand across hers and held it openly. If the launch was coming next day it meant they had to get away that night. They had to get away. And they still needed one more drum.

They had to find another drum. All the afternoon they looked. Just looking was difficult. They had to avoid rousing any suspicion in Gambona, had to school themselves to move slowly and disinterestedly. For a time they kept together. Then Lina and Peppino went into the house, hoping they might be able to examine some of the rooms and find something.

Fletcher carried on with his search outside until the light began to go. A drum, another drum . . . Now that they had something to work for, a chance opening up for them, he found himself moved by a vigorous, challenging excitement. They were going to beat Gambona. They had to beat Gambona. Another drum . . . the thought kept hammering in his mind. To escape using three would be madness. . . . He thought of the crazily-pitching raft, badly buoyed in the turbulence of the flood . . . saw Peppino being swept away as it tilted . . .

He wandered round the house and yard which had become so familiar to him that there seemed never to have existed any other place in his life. This was life, his life . . . this shabby, poverty-touched farm. Rome and his first meeting with Lina seemed far away. There was only this urgent, present moment. He stopped suddenly. Before him was Gambona's car, parked against the side of the house. He had a swift memory of Manzo refilling the petrol-tank from a four-gallon tin.

He slipped round to the back of the car and opened the boot. The petrol-container was there.

"What are you doing, signore?"

It was Guido standing just behind him. The little man had a puzzled look on his face, his head cocked sideways, like a bird. In his excitement Fletcher had forgotten him.

Fletcher dropped the boot-cover with a bang.

"Do you really want to know, Guido?"

"But certainly, signore. You have been acting strangely all day."

"Well, I'll tell you. I've a feeling the floods will go down to-night. I just wanted to make sure that there was plenty of petrol in the car. I'm going to break out and drive off . . ."

Guido laughed and Fletcher knew he had covered some, if not all, of the man's curiosity with his nonsense.

"There is no escape for you, signore. These floods will not go down. And, anyway—Gambona has the keys of the car. Come on—it is supertime."

Supper was an agony of impatience for him. He had no chance to tell the others of his discovery and it was hard to sit quietly eating.

The moment they were alone in their room, however, his elation broke out. He picked Lina up by the waist and swung her round, kissing her as he did so.

"We're all right!" he cried. "I've found it—the fourth drum! All we have to do now is to get out and then we'll be away to Aisella before they know we've gone!"

He could see his excitement pass to them. Peppino, going over to the stove, came back with a flask of wine. "We must drink to the success of our venture," he said. "I found this amongst the empty bottles over there. It's quite a good Chianti."

They drank straight from the flask. Lina's face was flushed, her eyes bright. "They never come up once we're locked in," she said. "We'll give them a couple of hours and then go out. There's a lot to be done."

As she spoke there was the sound of footsteps on the stairs and then the door opened. Gambona and Manzo came in.

Without a word, the two began to move around the room and it was clear that they were looking for something. Eventually Gambona pulled the mattress from Fletcher's bed and exposed the rope. He picked it up and turned towards them. Then he said reluctantly:

"Signore Fletcher, if you are thinking of going through the window—though what you would do then I cannot imagine—you must do it without a rope and face the drop. Also, do not think I have eyes in the back of my head or can read your thoughts. But since this morning Flavia has been moaning because it was a fine day and she could not find her washing-line. I am a thinking man, signore."

They were gone, leaving the three in the flatness of disappointment. One moment hope had been like a wine in their blood, and now . . . there was nothing but the dark thought of the coming day and the launch that would take them away. They sat there in silence, hearing the fret of the wind outside and the distant calling of the restless cattle.

Suddenly Lina jumped angrily to her feet.

"We mustn't give up! We can do without rope! We can use the mattress ticking and our blankets and cut them into strips."

"It'll take ages to make ropes out of that—and the stuff's rotten, anyway," Fletcher pointed out.

"Nevertheless—we're going to try!"

She jerked the blankets off her bed and held out her hand for Fletcher's penknife. He gave it to her. For a moment the two men watched her as she worked, then Peppino came over and began to help her. He gave Fletcher a glance, his mouth touched with a wry smile. "Women are incurable optimists. However—I think we must try."

Fletcher stood up. Anger was with him now—a hard, fighting anger. "Of course we must. We're going to do it. We're going to beat Gambona." He went towards the window. "You two get on with the rope while I go out and collect the drums. I'll carry them up to the copse and then come back for you and the ropes."

He climbed out of the window and on to the roof. Behind him he heard the framework being replaced. He made his way out of the house, full of confidence.

The rain had held off all day and the night, although windy, was fine and clear, with a moon climbing into the sky from the direction of the Adriatic. He got the two drums from the stable easily and carried them up to the copse. He came hurrying back to the car for the petrol tin. Time was their enemy now. When he went to open the boot, he found it was locked. He swore angrily. Guido must have told Gambona of his actions. But this fresh setback only made him more determined. He found a screwdriver in the car and forced the lock of the boot. He hid the tin in the shadows by the loft ladder and then slipped around the house. The other drum was in the scullery. He went across the yard, giving the lighted kitchen window a wide berth.

The window of the scullery opened easily and he climbed cautiously through it. A few yards away, in the kitchen, he could hear the voices of people talking. He lit his lighter and saw the drum where Lina had said it was, under a shelf by the door. He lifted it out. It was light and empty. The window, which he had left open, suddenly swung on its hinges in the wind and crashed shut, then swung back open and banged again. The noise in the scullery seemed thunderous. He put the drum down, doused his lighter and stood listening. The window slammed again, but before he could move towards it he heard the voices cease and then the rattle of the scullery latch. He had time only to press himself against the wall behind the opening door and pray that he would not be found.

Flavia came into the scullery, holding a small lamp.

"It's that catch again, Meo. I've told you to fix it. It slams about in every wind." Grumbling, she began to move towards the window and as she did so her foot struck against the empty drum. "And why you want to leave this old drum in my scullery, I don't know! I've told you to move it."

She leaned over and shut the window. Guido's voice came clearly from the kitchen: "Signora—bring the drum out with you. With a cushion on it, it will make a good seat. Then I can sit by the fire."

"If you think I'm having one of my cushions put on it, you're wrong." She turned back from the window. Fletcher prayed hard that

(Continued on page 39.)



Daphne Allen.

WORSHIPPED BY OUR REMOTE ANCESTORS AT THE WINTER SOLSTICE:
GODS AND GODDESSES OF THE ANCIENT CELTIC MYTHOLOGY.

The Deities our remote ancestors honoured, specially at the Winter Solstice, included the Gaelic Dagda (top, left). He was the Father of the Gods, and Lord of Fire and Thunder. When the Dagda changed the air he played on his harp, the seasons changed. Brighide, Bridget or Bride, the horned figure in the centre, was Goddess of the Moon, Spring and Poetry. She is shown carrying her symbol, the Flame of Inspiration. The Gaelic Lugh or Nuada, God of Light, Sun and Sky, comes

next (top right). He was called Lord of Science and his name is perpetuated in "Ludgate." Mannanan, Sea God, is depicted at the bottom, left. The Isle of Man is named after him; and his hounds were waves. Dana, the Earth Mother, stands next to him, holding a sheaf of corn, and to the right of her is Engus or Angus Og, the God of Love. He is depicted carrying the Cup of Healing. Mider, the Nature God, clad in green, is on the extreme right.

From the drawing by Daphne Allen; notes on the mythology supplied by Enid Jackman.



"THE WOOD-GATHERER", BY PAUL GAUGUIN (1848-1903). A PASTEL DRAWING RECALLING THE CHRISTMAS CAROL, "GOOD KING WENCESLAS."

This pastel drawing by Paul Gauguin recalls the opening lines of one of the most famous Christmas carols, which describe how the sight of a poor man gathering winter fuel kindled the Christmas spirit in the heart of Good King Wenceslas. It shows a peasant woman, wearing the characteristic head-dress of Brittany, stooping to collect sticks, and is a work of Gauguin's second Breton period (1888-89). This great nineteenth-century French artist did not take to painting until late in life, but he then followed the pursuit of art

with unrestrained zeal, broke with his business and his family and lived for painting alone. He first joined the Impressionists, but separated from them in 1886. He spent some time in Arles with Van Gogh in 1888, and in 1891 left for Tahiti, whither he returned in 1895 after a short visit to Paris. He died in great poverty in Dominique, leaving a number of remarkable landscapes and subject pictures painted in the Pacific Islands which by their monumental grandeur and fine colour represent the apex of his art.

Reproduced by courtesy of the Earl of Sandwich.



A RENAISSANCE BEAUTY IN ADORATION: "ST. MARY MAGDALENE", BY GIOVANNI BELLINI.

Worship, wonder and penitence are expressed in this lovely painting of St. Mary Magdalene by Giovanni Bellini [c. 1430-1516], a detail from "The Madonna and Child between Saints Mary Magdalene and Catherine," in the Accademia Gallery,

Venice. A masterpiece of Renaissance art, it forms an interesting comparison in style and subject with the masterpiece of the Impressionist School, Gauguin's "The Wood-Gatherer"—divided from it by some 400 years—reproduced on our facing page.

After a reproduction by I. F. I., Florence.



PROPERLY TURNED OUT FOR THE CHRISTMAS MORNING PARADE: MINIATURE MODELS OF THE COLDSTREAM GUARDS, SHOWING ACCURATE REPRESENTATIONS OF THEIR UNIFORM OVER 300 YEARS.

The superb discipline of the Brigade of Guards, their steadfastness and courage in battle, and their splendid performance on ceremonial occasions are among the proudest of British military traditions. The Coldstream Guards descend from a force raised by Lord Protector Cromwell from five companies, each drawn from Hazelrigg's and Fenwick's regiments, and put by him under the command of George Monck. They marched with General Monck from Coldstream to effect the Restoration, and were the only Puritan foot retained in the Royal army. The models we reproduce illustrate the development of the uniform worn by officers and other ranks of the

Coldstream Guards at different periods of their history. They are carefully modelled in lifelike positions, and hand-painted. Every care has been taken to ensure accuracy for these toy soldiers, whose perfection entitles them to qualify as cabinet pieces rather than playthings, though any boy lucky enough to receive them at Christmas would certainly cherish them. The bearskin cap was introduced for the whole regiment in 1830; and a 6-in. red plume is worn at the right-hand side. The Coldstream badge is an oval eight-pointed star, their motto *Nulli Secundus*, and their battle honours begin with Tangier, 1680, the earliest in the British Army.

Models reproduced by courtesy of Malleable Mouldings of Deal, Kent.

THE SLEEPING MAN—Continued from page 34.]

she would leave the drum in the scullery. But she went on, as she moved towards the door, "But I'll bring it out and then to-morrow perhaps Meo will remember to put it in the stable."

Fletcher saw her lift the drum and carry it out. He stood there thinking of the two upstairs busy with their ropes, and then of Arma, somewhere even now at the mouth of the river—Arma and the launch which to-morrow would be taking them away . . .

Hating to go back and give the bad news to the others, he searched the stables and outhouses again for another drum. In the end he had to give it up. He made his way round to the loft ladder. In the room he found Lina and Peppino just finishing their rope-making. They saw from his face that something was wrong.

Lina came to him, catching his arm. "John, you've been so long I began to think . . . John, what's happened?"

He told them about the drum.

"That only leaves us three—can we do it with them?" asked Peppino.

"It would be madness! They'll be difficult to fit to get the right balance. You know what the flood's like. In places it's a Niagara. We shall be thrown off."

"It may be mad, but anything's better than staying here. We've got to try it," Lina insisted. "We can use one of these ropes tied across the raft to hold on to."

Fletcher was silent for a moment. The roof section was heavy and water-logged. With three drums . . . Peppino could not swim . . .

Peppino caught his eye and said gently, "You're thinking of me, aren't you? We must try. You and Lina can always swim. I must take my chance . . ."

"It won't be much of a chance if you go overboard."

Peppino smiled, one eyebrow cocked, and answered, "I'll risk it."

They got out of the house without trouble. The night was fast passing. Crossing the meadow to the copse, the cattle moved restlessly, turning their great heads to stare at the three. Somewhere far distant a stranded cock began to crow. It was a weird sound, echoing across the expanse of rushing, silver waters. Coming over the fields, Lina whispered to Fletcher: "If anything happens, you try and keep with Peppino. I can look after myself . . ." And seeing her face, pale and lovely under the thin light of the moon, he murmured: "We'll manage. Somehow, we'll manage." Her hand touched him, and he knew she was with him and that nothing could change their love.

Peppino had brought with him three lengths of board which he had collected during the day on the pretext of using them as fuel in the stove. Fletcher made holes in the soft, water-soaked planks to take the lashings, and while the other two lifted the roof section he placed the drums and the petrol can in position and lashed them as securely as he could. They had no time to experiment with the best position for the drums, and he fitted them, two at the corners of one side of the raft and the petrol can in the middle of the opposite side. The mattress roping was rotten in places and occasionally broke when he put too much strain on it. Working under the moon, a chill wind whipping through the bushes, it was hard to control their impatience.

The noise of the flood was an angry beating in their ears and, moving around the raft, they became wet and muddy. The people in the farmhouse were long asleep, so they had no fear of being disturbed. Finally the drums were in place and Fletcher rigged a spare length of rope across the raft for them to grasp if anything went wrong. Another length he fixed to one end of the raft as a painter when they launched it. Between them they lifted the heavy section and eased it gently towards the water.

"Careful with it. We don't want to tear the drums off," he cautioned.

Eventually it was in the water, and Fletcher stood holding the painter. The current tore at the raft's outer edge, raising a line of creamy foam. It dipped heavily at one end, the water running up the boards, but the other end was a good three inches above water.

"Peppino—get aboard and try it."

Peppino waded to the raft and climbed gently aboard. It teetered, then steadied itself, and he moved away from the submerged end.

"Now you, Lina."

She turned to him, her hair a dark disorder, her eyes shadowed and anxious. For a moment she smiled at him. He helped her aboard, holding the painter still, and the raft lurched with the extra weight, and a wash of water surged across it. The raft was straining at the painter as the grip of the current, shouldering against it, made it suddenly alive and cumbersome like some clumsy animal.

"Easy with it!" he cried. "Steady it with your paddles!"

He eased the painter out and grabbed the side of the raft, ready to pull himself aboard. He saw Lina, a length of wood thrust pole-like into the water, trying to steady the raft, and Peppino moving gently to the far side to check the balance as he came aboard. There was a sudden warning shout from Peppino, and he was pointing upstream. Fletcher, scrambling on to the roof, had time only to see a great, twisting bulk of a dead tree racing down on them. It struck the raft, tipping it and driving it forward so that a great wave swept across it. The dead tree tilted and then surged clear of the raft. The paddle was torn from Lina's grasp and Peppino was flung into the water.

Fletcher grabbed Lina's hand and jumped for the bank. The raft, relieved of their weight, suddenly rose, buoyantly, and spun round like a great revolving plate. He saw Peppino, water to his knees, wade ashore, and then the raft moving away. He flung himself forward in the water and grabbed the side of the raft. He was drawn with it.

Lina shouted and Peppino raced along the bank. The raft gyrated slowly, and then, caught by some wanton current, slanted shorewards and crashed into a projecting spur of bushes. Peppino got a grip on

the edge and Lina hurried to help. Fletcher, now on the far side of the raft, worked his way round it, the cold water striking against his body, and helped them drag it a little way up the bank.

"Look!" cried Lina despairingly. She was pointing to the water. Floating free of the raft was one of the drums, torn away from its lashings by the crash. As they watched, it was drawn into an eddy, spun round and then sped away downstream.

They looked at one another in silence. It was the end. With only two drums, no matter how they placed them, they knew they could never use the raft. They would be in the water a few moments after leaving the island. For some time they stared at the waters in silence. Behind them was the stir and heavy breathing of the cattle. Fletcher saw Peppino's face, strained, tight-lipped, and he tried not to think of the first time he had seen that face . . . The lifting of a camera, the tiny movement of a shutter . . . so small, so insignificant, and in it death and horror for them all.

Lina said dully, her voice carrying the despair they all felt, "Well, no one can say we didn't try. John . . . you're shivering. We must get some of these clothes off."

Later, he sat on his bed, his clothes drying in front of the stove which Peppino had started. Through the window the dawn was coming up. Lina came and sat beside him. Hope had deserted them both, but there was a comfort in being close together. He looked at her as she rested against him, her eyes closed, the slim body in its dirty tousled green suit full of a tired grace, a faint shadow drawing a curve up the side of her throat. In a matter of hours the launch would arrive . . . He leaned over and kissed her and then, as her lips slid across his cheek, he heard her voice, almost a sob, "John . . . oh, *caro mio* . . .!"

The first thing Fletcher saw when he came down from their room the following morning and went into the courtyard was the drum Flavia had taken from the scullery. Meo had carried it across to the stable and left it outside the door. He turned to Lina who was with him.

"If we'd had that one—everything would have been all right."

Idly they strolled across to the stable and Lina sat down on the drum. She looked up at him and there was a tightness about her lips, a firmness of expression which was not far removed from anger.

"Must we give up, John? The launch isn't here yet."

He was silent for a moment. It could be done with three drums. Luck had been against them last night.

"Perhaps we could do it with three. But even if the launch is late—how can we work in broad daylight?"

He felt her hand tighten on his arm. "Let's go and see if the raft is still there."

She looked across at Guido, who had come into the yard after them. "He won't follow us into the wood."

The raft was still there, wedged against the bushes, but half of it was under water.

Walking back to the house Fletcher said: "It still only gives us three drums. Could we risk it again. . . ." Then seeing her face he put his hand on her arm. "Yes, I know. We must—if we get the chance."

As he spoke there was a shout from Guido. The man was pointing out at the floods. Coming down the stream was a small boat already submerged to its gunwales and sinking rapidly. There were two people in it. The boat sheered into the island just above the farm and the two people were thrown into the water close to Guido and Fletcher. The two men waded into the water and grabbed the two, hauling them ashore as the rowboat turned over and then, keel uppermost, was drawn away by the streaming flood.

They found they had saved a man and a woman. The man was Enzo Torio, a railway-crossing gate-keeper. He and his wife had spent two nights on the roof of their little house and then had tried to get away in the small boat which had been washed down to them. He was a little hysterical. His wife was going to have a baby soon . . . any moment. He knelt beside her, his arm round her shoulder, where she sat groaning on the ground, a fat, anxious man, his dark eyes smudgy and ringed with fatigue.

"What is to be done! It is our first—and if she dies! Maria, *cara mia*. . . . How do you feel?"

The woman made no answer. She sat, her eyes shut, moaning quietly to herself, the water from her clothes pooling around her.

Lina said sharply: "We must get her into the house."

Between them they helped the woman into the farm kitchen, where they were joined by the others. Lina and Flavia saw her into a ground-floor bedroom and were soon busy stripping off her wet clothes.

In the kitchen Enzo paced about anxiously. "What am I to do? She must have a doctor. It is any minute now." Gambona and Manzo looked at him and shrugged their shoulders.

Peppino put a hand on Enzo's shoulder. "Do not worry. As a young man I trained as a doctor. I will look after your wife."

"Only until the launch comes," snapped Manzo.

Peppino stared at him coldly. "Until she no longer has need of me!"

"Quiet, Manzo!" Gambona said. Then to Peppino he went on: "Do what you can."

Gambona went to the door and lit a cigarette. This was the most accursed business he had ever had. Trouble, nothing but trouble. . . . This Doctor was a fine man. It would be so easy if he could dislike him, have no feeling about him or his friends. . . . Five hundred thousand lire . . . he was earning it.

Enzo, who had been listening and watching them curiously, seized Peppino's hands and kissed them. "You are a doctor. The Holy Mother be praised . . . a doctor, here!" His fat face suddenly beamed and, with a swift accession of arrogance, he continued: "It will be a boy! In my family, it is always a boy first! *Dio*, what a two nights

we have spent." Without any warning at all, he suddenly collapsed to the ground in a faint.

Peppino went to the woman. Lina wanted to help, but he told her that Meo's wife would be enough. The coming of Enzo and his wife seemed to have disorganised the farm. Gambona and Guido stayed in the kitchen with Enzo, and Manzo posted himself at the end of the terrace to watch for the launch. Desperation making them rash, Lina and Fletcher openly picked up the oil-drum and carried it up to the copse. Fletcher had brought with him the clothes line, which he had again taken from the stable. With the rope they could lash the drums securely. How they were to get Peppino up to it and all escape without notice they had no idea. For the time being—the thought of the launch ever with them—they could only obey the desperate instinct in them to work on. To drop into apathy offered nothing. Hope was the last thing they must lose.

Suddenly as they were working, Fletcher paused and looked across at Lina.

"What a fool I've been! Lina, I've got it!"

"Got what, John?"

"This raft—it's a mad thing with only three floats. But I know how we can get another. Come on."

He began to hurry back towards the farm, explaining what they had to do. Lina went into the house and up to their room. Fletcher strolled around the outside until he was under their window. This side of the house was hidden from Manzo on the terrace. Lina threw down to him one of their blankets. Then, one by one, she began to drop down to him the empty wine-bottles stacked in their room. Fletcher caught them skilfully, checked that each was securely corked, and made a pile of them in the middle of the blanket. There were about fifty of them in the blanket before he signed to her to stop. He gathered up the corners of the blanket and tied them securely with a piece of the clothes line. When Lina joined him, he said: "You see. We'll lash this under the raft and now we shall have a float to each corner."

There was a kind of madness about them, feverish hope rising in them, and making them heedless of the risks they took. The situation anyway was so desperate that to hold back because of any risk would have been stupid.

They worked for two hours on the raft and no one disturbed them. It was late in the afternoon when they had finished, and they came back to the farm kitchen. Gambona, Guido and Enzo were there. Peppino was still in with Enzo's wife. Manzo was sitting on the terrace, ready to call Gambona when the launch should appear.

All day Fletcher had been dreading to hear the shout which would mean the end for them. Now he sat with Lina in the kitchen and waited for Peppino. Everything was ready. If only Peppino would come. They might have to make a run for it, but at least they would have a fighting chance. . . . Time was running out. . . . Time was precious. If the launch came while Peppino was still in with the woman, then they were lost. Impatience swept through him like a fever. Hurry, hurry, hurry . . . the word beat through his mind like a tattoo. He could see Lina, sitting with her hands clasped together, her fingers working nervously. Gambona was leaning back, his eyes shut, taking a nap. Enzo walked up and down nervously. Guido tried to talk to him, but had little success. Suddenly Enzo stopped in front of Fletcher and said abruptly:

"You are prisoners here, no?"

"We are."

"Shut up!" Gambona had wakened.

Enzo shrugged his shoulders defiantly. "I could smell evil when I came. I was right." He looked at Lina. "The good doctor—who is he? Inglese?"

"He's Doctor Francis Longman and—"

Gambona's hand was on her mouth. Fletcher sprang forward, but already Guido was between him and Gambona, and there was a revolver in his hand.

"Sit down, signore. It is silly to make trouble."

Gambona released Lina. "Don't make me angry, signorina . . . please. And you"—he turned on Enzo—"keep your nose out of this if you ever want to be a proud father."

The afternoon wore on, and the two sat there, burning with impatience, tortured with the fear that at any moment Manzo might come running in. Lina and Fletcher were silent. The strain and impatience of waiting was a physical pressure that seemed to take the life from them. They could only sit, trying not to think, not to feel, hearing the sound of the kitchen clock hammering away, hearing the soft fall and whisper of the fire, and over all the distant roar of the flood waters.

Just as daylight was leaving them, there was a sound through the house which brought them all to their feet. A little later Peppino came into the room. He was tired, but there was a smile on his long, puckish face as he turned to Enzo.

"You can go in, Enzo. They'll be all right. Your wife—and your son."

"A boy . . ." There were tears in Enzo's eyes as he took Peppino's hand. "Thank you, Doctor." Then with a sudden stiffening of his body he looked at Gambona and said with an angry dignity. "He is one who plans evil against you, Doctor. But you are a good man and all the time I have prayed to Saint Francis in honour of your name and your goodness. He will protect you and your friends, *signore dottore*. . . ."

"Thank you, Enzo."

"Get in to your wife—you old fool!" cried Gambona, and he pushed Enzo from the room.

Peppino came over to Lina. "I need some air."

She and Fletcher rose and went with him into the yard. Guido followed them.

The moment they were outside Fletcher began to talk hurriedly, his voice low and urgent.

"Listen, Peppino—we've got the raft fixed. Just come with us now and do as we say. Guido will follow us, but I can settle him. Don't hurry, but just stroll . . ." He broke off, for Guido had caught them up a little as they walked out of the yard.

It was hard for Lina and Fletcher to walk normally. They wanted to take Peppino's arms and run with him to the copse.

They were almost there, when the thing which they had dreaded all day happened. There was a shout from the terrace and, at the same moment, they heard the sound of a marine motor beating upstream.

"It is the launch. We must go back." Guido came up to them and took Fletcher's arm. Fletcher shook his head.

Guido looked at him, not understanding. "But, signore, it must be . . . Believe me, I am as sad as you, but—" He broke off. Fletcher's manner had suddenly made him suspicious. His hand went to his pocket.

"We're not going back, Guido."

As Fletcher spoke he raised his fist and hit Guido before he could draw his revolver. It was a vigorous punch and the man went down like a log.

"Run for it!" he shouted. They all raced towards the copse. Behind them, as they plunged into the bushes, they heard a shout, angry and repeated.

The raft was well afloat, firmly tied with stout rope and as it rose and fell there was the musical clink of bottles from the great bag that formed the fourth float. Fletcher loosened the painter and held it as Peppino and Lina climbed aboard. This time he took no chances, keeping the painter looped round a tree-trunk, and letting it free only when he was aboard. Even so, it was an anxious moment when they were all on the raft and he loosened the rope.

"Now!" he called, and they all pushed with their paddles. The raft, buoyant with four floats, slid out and was taken at once by the current. Gathering speed, it swept down the island towards the farm, the three of them paddling furiously to work it away from the farmland and over to the river, which would take them down to Aisella and safety. As they swept by the farm pasture, they saw Guido rising to his feet. He stared out at them and then he turned and began to run towards the farm, shouting as he went. A few seconds later they were sweeping by the farm wall and could see a long, thin launch moored against it and a man standing in the bows. The man watched them pass and raised a lazy hand to them.

"We've got a little grace—not much," said Fletcher.

Below the farm the main course of the river ran in a series of great loops, a broad fairway clearly marked on either side by the tops of trees from the surrounding flooded land. In the main stream, where the current was strong, the raft was difficult to steer, spinning round and round in the eddies. Gradually they worked the raft out of the river, cutting across the first loop between the tree-tops where the current was weaker. But even here the raft spun round and dipped over the hidden banks and obstructions, sometimes sending water clean over it. Once they were unable to avoid the crest of an olive-tree and they smashed through the branches.

"We mustn't do that often," warned Fletcher. "Our bottles won't stand many hard knocks."

At that moment, loud and clear behind them, came the burst of the launch's motor over the water. Lina looked at Fletcher and he nodded. Their escape had been discovered. Guido had reached the farm. But neither of them looked back. Their eyes were ahead, downstream, where lay Aisella. The light was going from the sky now and a soft dusk was gathering over the waters. A little later they heard the launch move by them on their right, out in the main stream. For a moment their low craft was hidden by the rising tree-tops. They heard it roar away from them and then begin to quest about the river. After a time it sounded nearer and Fletcher guessed that it was quartering the edge of the flooded land.

The raft was taken by a sudden swirl and crashed against some underwater obstruction. Fletcher grabbed Lina's arm as they were thrown into a heap on the wet planks. The raft hung, trapped by the hidden snag, and the stream swept over them, threatening to tear them away. Fletcher jumped to his feet and began to rock the raft violently. For a moment it lurched and swayed and then, with a vicious grating noise, slid off into the current.

As they sat up and began to paddle again, Peppino pointed to one corner of the raft. It was low, the water rolling over it as the platform tilted.

"Move back!" Fletcher shouted. The crash had broken some of the bottles in the blanket float and the raft had lost buoyancy.

"Look!" cried Lina. The flood had taken them now out of the trees into the main river below the loop. Behind them, just visible in the dusk, was the launch coming slowly down the edge of the trees.

They began to paddle furiously, working across the main river to reach the trees on the far side. To stay out in the river was fatal, for there the launch could catch them easily.

The roar of the launch engine broke loudly behind them, and they knew they had been seen. Fletcher glanced back and saw it coming downstream with a great wave spreading from its bows. They were across the river and into an area pocked with the tops of fruit-trees by the time the launch reached them. Fletcher saw it swing away from the trees and hang out in the river, marking their progress. So long as they kept out of the river, he thought, they would be safe. The launch would never come over the shallow, flooded orchards. It was now a game of hide-and-seek, safety lying only in the shelter of the submerged trees.

On the raft little was said. All their attention was on keeping the raft clear of the trees that swam up towards them, and the floating débris

that swept by them. But paddle as they might they could do little more than keep going with the main flow of the flood. Time and again they hit snags and Fletcher saw the raft tilting more and more.

They came out of the trees, driving across a clear stretch of water away from the river. As they did so, they saw the launch turning out of the river to their left. It came roaring across the open stretch towards them, taking a chance there would be no underwater obstructions. Fletcher saw the figures of three men aboard—Gambona, Manzo and another, clear against the western sky. It swept round them in a great circle and turned to come up alongside them against the current. He saw Manzo run forward with a boat-hook. They tried to paddle away from it, but the current took them down inexorably.

Then, when they were twenty yards from it, when he could see Manzo running forward with a boat-hook, the launch shuddered and Manzo was thrown to the deck. They swept by and he heard Gambona shouting furiously, heard the frenzied roar of the motor as the man at the wheel tried to back the launch off the soft bank on which it had gone aground. He saw Peppino and Lina working madly at their paddles and felt his own muscles cracking as they fought to drive the raft ahead.

"We've still got a chance!" Peppino shouted.

And now the current took them and swept them out into the main river. It held them, denying all their efforts to reach the security of the quieter waters, racing them along, washing over them as the raft tipped and lurched. Behind them the launch broke free from the bank and came speeding after them.

"Aisella! Look, the bridge!" Lina raised her paddle and pointed. Away downstream, dimly visible in the growing darkness, was the great span of a bridge that marked the town.

Looking back, Fletcher saw that the launch was not two hundred yards behind them and gaining rapidly. But ahead was the bridge and Aisella coming nearer with each stroke of their paddles.

They saw the bridge looming up, a great span of grey brick, a gateway to safety and, as they swept under it, Peppino shouted wildly, "We've done it! We've done it!"

They swept out from under the bridge. The wildness and exhilaration in them died. There was Aisella, a line of houses reaching away down the river, the great tower of the church rising above the roof-tops. The current took them, swung them to the right, forced them in a long, glassy sweep of water between a gap in the houses and they were in the town. But it was not the Aisella they had expected. Here was no safety, no refuge. It was a dead, submerged town.

They stopped paddling, the heart taken from them. Slowly and solemnly the raft glided between the houses. A cat called piteously to them from a roof, bedding and curtains dragged in the current from the window-tops, and the great press of water which had risen to the eaves surged against the walls, and made a fierce, sustained roar that seemed to mock their misery. Aisella was flooded, and the great waters rushed through it, spewing ahead of them into the wide square, from the far side of which rose the baroque front of the church.

Behind them the launch swung into the roof-marked channel, bearing rapidly down on them as the raft moved into the open square, a great lake of water, thick and turbulent with scum and debris. From the far side of the square the waters poured out past the church through a narrow opening. Fletcher saw the sweep of foam and rapids in the mouth of the opening and knew that the moment the raft was taken in that fierce torrent it would tip. He drove his paddle fiercely into the waters.

"The church!" he shouted. "Make for the church!"

The others saw the danger and they bent to their paddles. Before

the church was a flat-topped porch, its roof just above the water-level.

They all three paddled hard and gradually they drew away from the narrow outlet through which the waters of the square poured.

"Jump for it!" Fletcher shouted, as the crazily tilting raft swung against the porch. He leapt forward on to the roof, dragging Lina with him. Peppino landed alongside of them and, as they stood up, the raft was sucked along the church and disappeared into the maelstrom of outpouring waters.

They turned, the beat of the launch a sudden thunder, and saw it come down the street and heel into the square. Gambona pointed at them and the launch headed across the square towards the porch. Fletcher put his arm around Lina. Peppino stood beside them. There was no more they could do.

Then, as the launch reached the middle of the square, it gave a sudden lurch. There was a rending, grinding noise and the sharp sound of splintering wood. A tongue of flame leapt suddenly from the launch's cockpit. There was the shouting of frightened men and then a wild scream which was lost in a vicious, shattering explosion.

Before their eyes they saw the launch flung upwards. It broke apart,



Gambona pointed at them and the launch headed across the square towards the porch. Fletcher put his arm round Lina. Peppino stood beside them. There was no more they could do.

great pieces of wreckage being hurled into the air, to fall back into the flood, sending up tall gusts of hissing water. In a few seconds there was nothing left of the launch except a flaming mass of wreckage that swept towards the opening by the church and was drawn out of the square.

Lina turned and buried her face in Fletcher's shoulder. He felt her body shake with sobs, with a wild relief, and he held her close. None of the men on the launch could have escaped.

Peppino stood looking out at the square, his tall frame, dark and angular against the pale stones. He said quietly:

"Poor devils: . . ." Then after a moment he turned to Fletcher. "I know this town. This is the Church of Saint Francis."

Fletcher hardly heard him. He too was looking at the rolling waters of the square. "I wonder what they hit out there? . . . It must have been something pretty solid."

"It was," Peppino answered. "Enzo said Saint Francis would look after us—and he has. There's a bronze statue of the Saint in the centre of the square."

THE END.

FAMOUS HORSES IN ART: THE CHARGERS OF GREAT COMMANDERS AND A QUEEN'S MOUNT.

See the Colour Reproductions on page 43.

THE horse seldom challenges the dog's position as man's intimate friend, companion and, at times, his pampered jester and pet. It holds an equally important, but more official position in the hierarchy of our animal servants, for it figures in the pageantry of kings and conquerors; and, before the age of mechanisation, went to war with its masters and, as a matter of course, shared in the operational dangers and the hardships of campaigning.

Battle chargers have been named after victorious engagements, buried with military honours, and immortalised by memorials; and have provided sculptors and painters with subjects. Alexander the Great named a city after his horse *Bucephalus*, his favourite mount from the time he acquired it until its death from wounds inflicted during a battle against the Indian King Porus; and Caligula overstepped the bounds of reasonable enthusiasm for horseflesh by having his stallion *Incitatus* elected a priest and consul. Kings and queens and military heroes and their chargers have been honoured together in many songs and stories, paintings and sculptures. At Hatfield House, the historic seat of the Marquess of Salisbury, there is an outstandingly decorative sixteenth-century painting of a high-mettled white horse led by a groom in Elizabethan costume, which, tradition in the Gascoigne-Cecil family says, is the horse which carried Queen Elizabeth I. when she reviewed her troops at Tilbury before the approach of the Armada in 1588, and made her famous fighting speech: "I know that I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a King of England too; and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain or any Prince of Europe should dare to invade the borders of my realm"; but there can be few more romantic memorials to horses than the pair of paintings by James Ward, R.A., the British animal artist (1769-1859), representing the famous chestnut *Copenhagen* and the celebrated light-grey barb, or, more correctly, Arab, *Marengo*, the chargers respectively ridden by the great rival British and French commanders, the first Duke of Wellington and the Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, on the field of Waterloo. These paintings are in the collection of the Duke of Northumberland, by whose permission they are reproduced in colour on page 43. They are works of exceptional interest, both from the documentary point of view and as excellent horse portraits.

Copenhagen, named by Wellington after his victorious Danish campaign, which culminated in the surrender of the Danish capital in 1807, was a chestnut thoroughbred, foaled in 1808, which carried the Duke on many great occasions and was buried with military honours when it died at Stratfield Saye in 1836, where a headstone marks its grave. In his book, "Sport in War," Captain Lionel Dawson, R.N., refers to a dramatic and thrilling episode in which *Copenhagen* figured during the Battle of Quatre Bras (June 16, 1815). Soon after the beginning of the action, he states, the 92nd Regiment, Gordon Highlanders, was formed in line along the Charleroi road and ordered by the Duke to lie down in the ditch which, the fence above, bounded this highway.

The 92nd remained all day in their position, repulsing charges and under fire. During the afternoon the Duke of Brunswick led his Hussars past their flank to repel some French cavalry who

had broken his infantry. In this they failed, and were swept away by French infantry fire. Wellington, mounted on *Copenhagen*, was in front of the 92nd, since from there he had a central view of the field. As the defeated German Hussars fled, the Duke of Wellington became involved in the confusion and was in danger of capture. But with drawn sword he disengaged himself from the *mêlée*, galloped back towards the hedge and ditch lined by the Highlanders, and, calling to them to lie still, he rode at the obstacle, and *Copenhagen* cleared it, men and all. As he landed, Wellington reined round and coolly ordered the regiment to be ready. Ward's painting of this great horse, whose leap at Quatre Bras saved his master, was exhibited in the Royal

Academy in 1824, when it was bought by the then Duke of Northumberland. *Copenhagen* has a memorial in London also, for in the great bronze group showing Wellington mounted, which stands directly opposite to Apsley House, now the Wellington Museum, the Duke is represented on his famous charger. The group is the work of Sir J. E. Boehm, R.A., and has occupied its present position since December, 1888. There are also portraits of *Copenhagen* in the present Duke of Wellington's private collection at Stratfield Saye and at Apsley House.

Marengo, Napoleon's favourite charger, was also a beautiful animal, a white or light-grey barb, or, more correctly, an Arab, 14 hands 1 in. in height, with the typical black eye and wide nostril of his race, clean limbs, and "a faithful heart." Napoleon acquired him in Egypt after the Battle of Aboukir, 1799, and rode him on many historic days. *Marengo* carried him at Marengo in 1800, and received his name after the victory. He is also believed to have been Napoleon's mount at Aus-

terlitz, 1805, at Wagram, 1809, in the disastrous Russian campaign, 1812, and at Waterloo in 1815, when he was wounded in the near hip. This was not *Marengo*'s only scar of battle, for when he reached England after Waterloo, it was reported that he had five bullet wounds in his hinder quarters and that one bullet remained unextracted in his tail. In Vernet's celebrated painting of Napoleon at Wagram, *Marengo* is represented carrying the Emperor, and David's bravura portrait of "Napoleon crossing the Alps" depicts him astride a cavorting white horse which presumably represents *Marengo*, though, in point of fact, it is believed that on the famous journey Napoleon was actually mounted on a mule.

After Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, according to the *Cavalry Journal*, Lord Petre obtained possession of *Marengo* and sold him to Lieut.-General J. J. W. Angerstein, formerly of the Grenadier Guards, who bred from him at his paddocks at New Barnes, near Ely. He was well cared for and cherished in his old age, and on his death his skeleton was preserved and presented to the Royal United Service Institution by Lieut.-General Angerstein, with two of his hoofs. The remaining hoofs were made into snuff-boxes. One passed into the possession of the Angerstein family of Weeting Hall, Norfolk, and the other was presented by the General to his brother-officers of the Brigade of Guards and is kept in the Tilt Guard room at St. James's Palace. Those invited to enjoy the hospitality of the Guards on Queen's Guard are to this day offered a pinch of snuff from the box made

from this hoof of *Marengo*. James Ward painted his portrait of *Marengo* in 1824 for the third Duke of Northumberland; and in accordance with the taste of the period, introduced an allegorical atmosphere. The artist's idea was to convey the alarm of *Marengo* at the raven—a bird of ill-omen; while the setting sun indicated the departing of the glory of the Emperor, whom this horse had carried so faithfully; through those victorious campaigns when Europe trembled at Napoleon's name, and on the day when that great British soldier, the first Duke of Wellington, ended his domination of Europe.—M. S.-K.



TRADITIONALLY BELIEVED TO BE THE HORSE ON WHICH QUEEN ELIZABETH I. WAS MOUNTED WHEN SHE REVIEWED THE TROOPS AT TILBURY: "THE WHITE HORSE" AT HATFIELD HOUSE. One of the most interesting paintings at Hatfield House, seat of the Marquess of Salisbury, is a sixteenth-century picture of a light grey or white stallion, with a groom. Tradition in the Cecil family states that it was the mount of Queen Elizabeth when she reviewed the troops at Tilbury in 1588 before the defeat of the Armada. (Reproduced by Courtesy of the Marquess of Salisbury.)



SITUATED IN THE GROUNDS OF STRATFIELD SAYE: THE GRAVE OF COPENHAGEN, THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON'S CHARGER, WITH AN INSCRIBED HEADSTONE.

Copenhagen, a grandson of Eclipse, was bred by Field Marshal Lord Grosvenor and purchased from the Marquess of Londonderry for £400 by the first Duke of Wellington. The horse, foaled in 1808, died in 1836, after an "old age of dignified leisure" receiving for ten years a daily allowance of bread from the hands of the Duchess, and was interred with military honours. The Duchess frequently wore a bracelet of his hair. The tombstone on *Copenhagen*'s grave is inscribed: "Here lies *Copenhagen*, the charger ridden by the Duke of Wellington on the entire day at the battle of Waterloo," and the couplet beneath these words runs: "God's humble instrument of meaneer clay Should share the glory of that glorious day." Our photograph is reproduced by Courtesy of John Murray from "A History of Stratfield Saye," compiled by the Rev. Charles H. Griffith, Rector of Turgis-Stratfield at the suggestion of Evelyn Duchess of Wellington, with photographs by Colonel Barrington Campbell, Scots Guards (1891).



"MARENGO," THE BARB CHARGER, RIDDEN BY NAPOLEON BONAPARTE AT THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO. THE BACKGROUND EMBLEMATIC OF HIS MASTER'S DOWNFALL; BY JAMES WARD, R.A. (1769-1859). EXHIBITED AT THE R.A. 1826 AND AT "THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS OF THE R.A." IN 1951-52.

Reproduced by Courtesy of the Duke of Northumberland.



"COPENHAGEN," THE CHESTNUT CHARGER RIDDEN BY THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON AT WATERLOO; BY JAMES WARD, R.A. EXHIBITED AT THE R.A. 1824.

Reproduced by Courtesy of the Duke of Northumberland.



A VENETIAN BEAUTY: BY GIOVANNI ANTONIO GUARDI (1698-1760).

This portrait of a Young Woman, recently acquired by the Fitzwilliam Museum, is by Giovanni Antonio Guardi, who in his own day held a distinguished position among the brilliant painters of the rococo period in Venice, of whom Tiepolo is the greatest. Giovanni Antonio Guardi's paintings have since been confused with those of his subsequently better-known brother Francesco, and have only recently been recognised and correctly attributed. [Reproduced by Courtesy of the Fitzwilliam Museum.]



"A LADY WITH A PET SQUIRREL AND STARLING", BY HANS HOLBEIN, THE YOUNGER (1497-1543.)

This superb painting is by Hans Holbein, the Younger, the great artist of the Northern Humanist movement who became Court painter to Henry VIII. in 1536, and numbered the leading personalities of the England of his day among his sitters.

It was discovered at Cholmondeley Castle in 1925, and is thought to date from Holbein's first visit to England, c. 1527-28. The sitter, who wears a close-fitting white fur cap, probably belonged to the circle of the family of Sir Thomas More.

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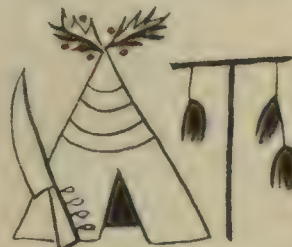
Now for fun and larks. Six or eight young people, preferably of opposite sexes, pick sides. The leader holds pudding on thumb balanced at point D, and when the three girls shout BRANDY SAUCE the boys make a pyramid with their hands and the festive sphere is snatched from one corner to the other of the rectangle of players.

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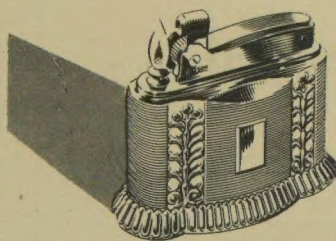
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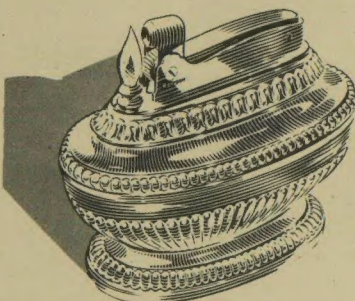
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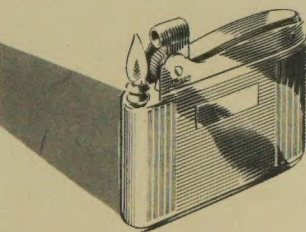
Husband gives wife gives husband

A pair of guns in an autumn syndicate? A grey mink in a strongroom safe? Or chocolates in a fit of extravagance? A Ronson Diana table lighter in a Christmas mood costs less (73/6) and makes a charming husband oblique wife gift.



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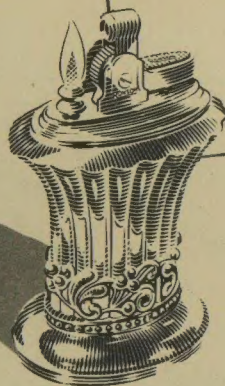


For a lady who smokes

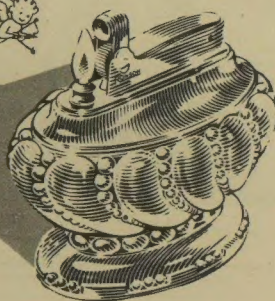
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16 IDEAS FOR GIFTS

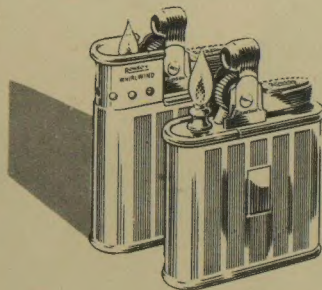
some a little lighter hearted than others



Idée élégante For the lover of lovely things, the Ronson Newport table lighter, is a collector's resistance piece. You might well resist it if it were more expensive, but at 73/6 it puts Red Anchor Chelsea and the Staffordshire dog right on the china shelf.



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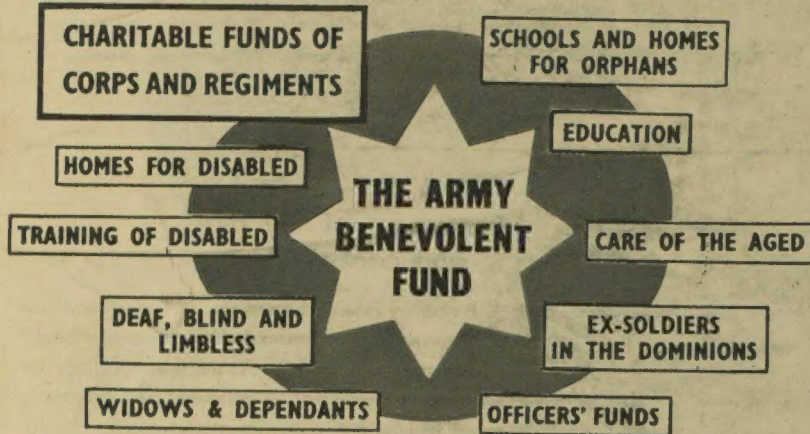


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Christmas Outlook



COLD and dark tonight? Who cares! Christmas is coming and there's magic in the air! Picture yourself a child again. Remember those thousand tiny thrills of anticipation you used to feel as each night brought the great day nearer! Will you help us to ensure that, for our great family of all ages (from under one to over ninety) this year's Christmas will live up to expectations? Do please send a gift to General Albert Orsborn, 101, Queen Victoria Street, London, E.C.4.

The Salvation Army

Please send a Christmas Gift to the IMPERIAL CANCER RESEARCH FUND

Patron—HER MOST
GRACIOUS MAJESTY
THE QUEEN

President—The Rt. Hon. The
EARL OF HALIFAX,
K.G., P.C.

The Fund was founded in 1902 under the direction of the Royal College of Physicians of London and the Royal College of Surgeons of England. It is a centre for research and information on Cancer and carries on continuous and systematic investigations in up-to-date laboratories at Mill Hill.

Gifts should be sent to the Honorary Treasurer,
Mr. Dickson Wright, F.R.C.S., at Royal College
of Surgeons, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, W.C.2.



DR. BARNARDO'S HOMES

STILL DEPENDENT ON
VOLUNTARY GIFTS & LEGACIES.

Please be Father Christmas
to a boy or girl in our care.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS OF 10/-

or of any amount for our
7,000 children's food will
be warmly welcomed.

Cheques, etc. (crossed), payable
"Dr. Barnardo's Homes," should
be sent to 92 Barnardo House,
Stepney Causeway, London, E.1.

Thank you
Santa Claus!



But . . . please don't forget
the others!

There are 5,000 children in our
family who also hope their
wishes will come true—

WILL YOU BE
THEIR SANTA CLAUS?

Christmas Gifts gratefully
received by the Secretary

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

formerly

WAIFS & STRAYS

OLD TOWN HALL, KENNINGTON, S.E.11

A VOLUNTARY SOCIETY STILL NEEDING YOUR HELP.

If your shirt's a VANTELLA



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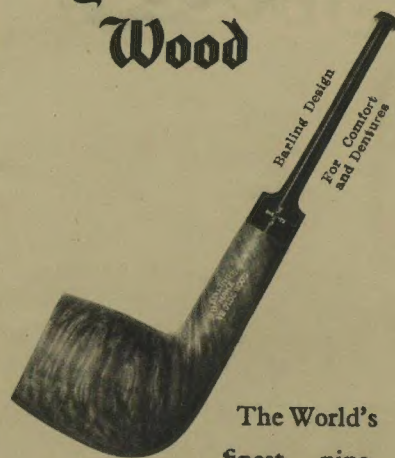
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THE TREASURE EXQUISITE

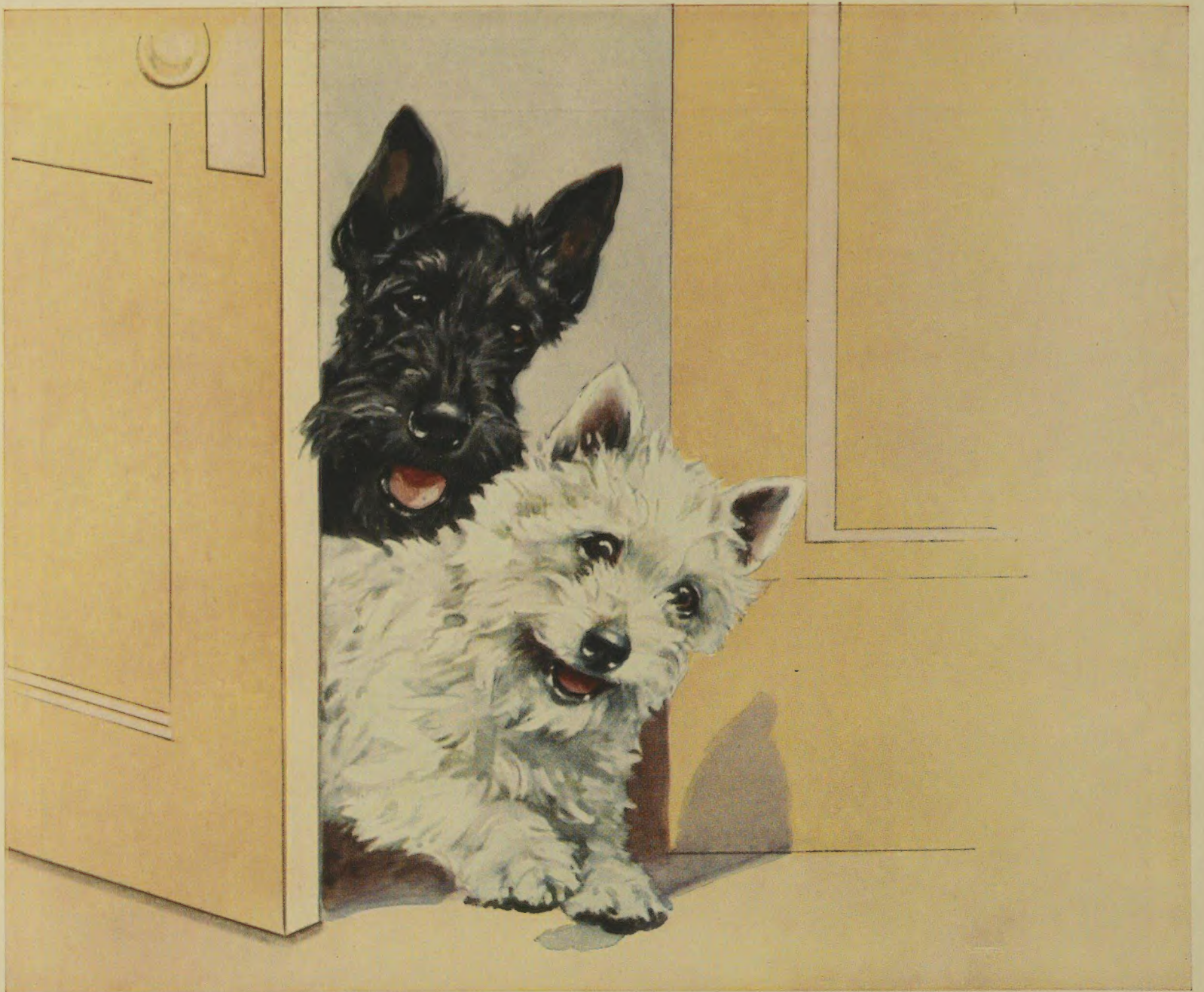
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Empress Catherine with ermine cape and diamond crown and order. The "Court Arabs" are gold and enamel. Height 2½ in. Behind is a miniature of the Empress. Colour photograph by courtesy of Wartski, reproduced for your pleasure by the makers of:

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To all our friends everywhere

*Greetings and Best Wishes for a
Happy Christmas and a Good New Year*

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